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HENRY TAYLOR'S CORRESPONDENCE

PRINTED BY
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CORRESPONDENCE

OF

HENRY TAYLOR

EDITED BY

EDWARD DOWDEN

LONDON
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1888

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PREFACE.

It was Sir Henry Taylor's intention that at a fitting time a portion of his Correspondence should be published. In the year 1884 he went through his letters and selected those which he considered worthy of preservation. Each letter was carefully read, and passages which seemed unsuitable for publication were cancelled. Nothing, accordingly, in the present volume appears without Sir Henry Taylor's sanction. In the case of letters addressed to him, the writers or their representatives have been consulted, and authority for the publication has been obtained.

The body of letters placed by Lady Taylor in my hands is large, and it contains scarcely anything that does not possess some interest or importance. From such ample sources it would have been easier to have taken material for two volumes than for one. But Sir Henry Taylor had a strong sense of the gains of moderation in presenting to the public such memorials and remains as are here printed. 'In these days,' he wrote to Professor Knight, 'when a great man's path to posterity is likely to be more and more crowded, there is a tendency to create an obstruction in the desire to give an impulse.' An accumulation

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of insignificant details is always an obstruction ; but in this instance the selection of letters has been made not from a mass of inferior matter, but from matter in the main like in character to that which now lies before the reader, and of like interest.

A letter-writer, Sir Henry Taylor has said more than once, is seen best in a correspondence, not in a succession of letters written by himself alone. He appears surrounded, as he was in life, by a group of friends. The force of his character and the play of his mind are felt indirectly as well as directly. And if his correspondents be eminent persons, or persons worth knowing for their own sakes, a double service is rendered by the publication.

A very small space is occupied in this volume by letters of the most eminent of the friends of Henry Taylor's early manhood—Robert Southey. So many letters from Southey to Henry Taylor appear in the 'Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey,' edited by his son, that it seemed desirable to represent here the other side of the correspondence.

The choice of letters has been determined chiefly by a desire to exhibit the various sides and aspects of the writer's mind and character, and the various directions of his activity—as poet, as public servant, in his home life, in his graver and in his lighter moods, in the strength and fidelity of his affections, in his kindly wisdom as a counsellor to those who needed the aid of foresight, strength, or skill.

This volume will interest those readers most who

are best acquainted with Henry Taylor's 'Autobiography'; and indeed it is as a companion volume to the 'Autobiography' that it ought to be viewed. The figures in that admirable gallery of living portraits now step forth from the canvas and speak.

Henry Taylor, especially in his later years, became what I may call a connoisseur in the fine art—now almost lost—of letter-writing. He contributed to the 'Nineteenth Century' (September 1881) an article on English letters and letter-writers, with a passage from which, having a bearing on his own practice, I may conclude:—

'Familiar letters, it is said, to be admired, should be written with ease and fluency. Such letters, for the most part, are not written to be admired; and when read by others than those to whom they were written, as they often are, in volumes of correspondence posthumously published, ease and fluency alone will not make them acceptable. And when they are the letters of literary men, whether or not they may seem to have been fluently written, they will be valued for what does not often lend itself to fluency. Writers who have been occupied all their lives in the moulding and shaping of language, and have a love of it for its own sake, may be expected to write even their familiar letters in the spirit of that love and under the influence of the habits to which it has given birth. They will not, if they are wise, value their language above the thoughts it expresses, or for any admiration it may meet with; should they do so,

it will be likely to lose its grace and its charm. But such men, even in the soliloquies of thought, will often occupy and please themselves, for the pleasure's sake only, with casting their thoughts into one form or another of language, and making out, perhaps, in the process, what they are worth and whither they tend. And if they do so in talking to themselves, there is no reason why they should do otherwise in writing to their friends.

'There is another class of familiar letters which are more likely to be fluently written—those which are to express feelings rather than thoughts. But even these, if the writers are literary men, may be found to have more than ordinary merits of form. There are letters written by Southey, in moments of absorbing emotion, which are as perfect in diction as if they had been works of art. In his case the words fell naturally into the mould made for them by habit. With others there may be no mould absolutely established, and yet there may be a habit of moulding and shaping *ad hoc*, which cannot be easily supplanted; and there is no reason why it should; for the process is perhaps not less quieting and soothing than the murmuring twirl of the old woman's spinning-wheel in Wordsworth's sonnet.'

EDWARD DOWDEN.

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CORRESPONDENCE

OF

HENRY TAYLOR.

From William Wordsworth to Henry Taylor.[1]

Rydal Mount : December 26, 1823.

Dear Sir,—You perhaps are not aware that the infirmity in my eyes makes me afraid of touching a pen, and, though they are always much better in winter than in the summer season, I am obliged mostly to employ an amanuensis, as I do at present. I should not, however, have failed to answer your obliging letter immediately, if I could have been of any service to you in the point to which you directed my attention. I have not, nor ever had, a single poem of Lord Byron's by me, except the 'Lara' given me by Mr. Rogers, and therefore could not quote anything illustrative of his poetical obligations to me. As far as I am acquainted with his works, they are the most apparent in the third canto of

[1] On the occasion of an article by Henry Taylor in the *London Magazine* entitled 'Recent Poetical Plagiarisms and Imitations.' A second article followed in March, 1824.

'Childe Harold'; not so much in particular expressions, though there is no want of these, as in the tone (assumed rather than natural) of enthusiastic admiration of Nature, and a sensibility to her influences. Of my writings, you need not read more than the blank verse poem on the river Wye to be convinced of this. Mrs. Wordsworth tells me that in reading one of Lord Byron's poems, of which the story was offensive, she was much disgusted with the plagiarisms from Mr. Coleridge—at least she thinks it was in that poem, but as she read the 'Siege of Corinth' in the same volume, it might possibly be in that. If I am not mistaken, there was some acknowledgment to Mr. Coleridge, which takes very much from the reprehensibility of literary trespasses of this kind. Nothing lowered my opinion of Byron's poetical integrity so much as to see 'pride of place' carefully noted as a quotation from 'Macbeth,' in a work where contemporaries, from whom he had drawn by wholesale, were not adverted to. It is mainly on this account that he deserves the severe chastisement which you or some one else will undoubtedly one day give him, and may have done already, as I see by advertisement the subject has been treated in the 'London Magazine.'

I remember one impudent instance of his thefts. In Raymond's translation of Cox's travels in Switzerland, with notes of the translator, is a note with these words, speaking of the fall of Schaffhausen: 'Lewy, descendant avec moi sur cet échafaud, tomba à genoux en s'écriant: *Voilà un enfer*

d'eau!' This expression is taken by Byron, and beaten out unmercifully into two stanzas, which a critic in the 'Quarterly Review' is foolish enough to praise. They are found in the fourth canto of 'Childe Harold.' Whether the obligation is acknowledged or not I do not know, having seen nothing of it but in quotation.

Thank you for your parallels; I wished for them on Mr. Rogers's account, who is making a collection of similar things relating to Gray. There are few of yours, I think, which one could swear to as conscious obligations. The subject has three branches—accidental coincidences without any communication of the subsequent author; unconscious imitations; and deliberate conscious obligations. The cases are numerous in which it is impossible to distinguish these by anything inherent in the resembling passage, but external aid may be called in with advantage where we happen to know the circumstances of an author's life, and the direction of his studies. Do not suffer my present remissness to prevent you favouring me with a letter if there is the least chance of my being of service to you. I shall reply immediately if I have anything to say worthy your attention. With best wishes from myself and family,

I remain, dear sir, very sincerely yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

When you write to your father, be so good as to make my respectful remembrances to him.

From Henry Taylor to Hyde Villiers.

May 24, 1825.

I do not and did not suppose, and did not mean to impute any further community on your part with the Utilitarians than what you avow. As to themselves, two or three conversations are not grounds on which to form any conclusive opinions of those even whose conversation I have listened to. But, in the absence of other knowledge of them, my inconclusive opinion is that their bigotry to the belief in which they have been brought up has narrowed the scope of their sympathies and comprehensions, and in consequence falsified their conclusions. I speak of Austin and Mill, jun., in this respect. As to the soundness of their opinions, I should be much inclined to distrust any opinions which are opposed to those held by a great majority of the educated part of mankind, because I believe that in a multitude possessing equal facilities for the exercise of intellect there will not be found a few whose intellects are so transcendently superior to all the others as to enable them to entertain whole schemes of thought and trains of reasoning of which the others are incapable. It is only on particular points and in particular directions that particularities of situation and circumstance can give such a superiority to individual intellects. If it be said that the majority have the disadvantages of education and self-interest, I answer that the few are exposed to the same disadvantages—though probably

the external circumstances which educate their minds in dissent from received opinions were in most cases not designedly applied, and the self-interest acts through different passions.

I think that the misapplication of ridicule which I have heard from Austin[1] in conversation would justify the supposition that in conversation he would ridicule the martyrdoms ; but I ought not to infer that he would misconceive their effect if he were deliberately to apply his mind to the subject. I apprehend that ridicule is alien from reason and adverse to clear ideas, and in the carelessness of conversation a man who seems so much addicted to it as Austin will use it in a way to expose him (if due allowance be not made) to imputations of more preposterous mistakes than will appear (those allowances being made) to be committable by so strong an intellect. But whatever be their power of calculating consequences, I suppose they will admit themselves incapable of sympathising in the feelings and enthusiasms of these men; they cannot, therefore, admire a great deal which is admired by others in them and their history.

[1] Charles Austin. See *Henry Taylor's Autobiography*, vol. i. p. 79.

From Henry Taylor to his Mother.[1]

King Street: December, 1825.

The audience [in the Academics][2] was a more striking one in appearance than one can see elsewhere —the Houses of Lords and Commons furnish no remarkable assemblage. Young Mill is to open the debate on Friday week with an attack upon the aristocracy as a pernicious class. He is about twenty years old, a great speaker, and considered to be a youth of very singular ability. Singular one can certainly tell him to be in a moment. I have only heard him speak a few words now and then when the rules of the Society were debated. He is an animated, determined-looking youth, and speaks, I am told, without hesitation, digression, ornament, or emphasis, in a tone to me in the little I heard almost ridiculously simple and with very odd but very considerable effect.

From Henry Taylor to his Father.

(Undated, but certainly 1825.)

Hyde Villiers made a scientific and able speech an hour long at our new Debating Society last Friday upon Colonization; it has made some noise, procured him a compliment and an invitation from the

[1] In the headings of these letters, Henry Taylor so names his stepmother, for whom his affection and respect were great and constant. See his Autobiography, vol. i. p. 37.

[2] A debating society to which the Villiers brothers, Charles Austin, John Romilly, and Edward Strutt belonged.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, I dare say, has done him credit in the world, as it ought to do. I made a short speech at the same place, which did well enough, though it was very near the fate of the story of the bear and the fiddle.[1] But our great speaker hitherto (we have only had two meetings) is young Mill, son of the Radical of that name at the India House. The youth (only nineteen years old) believes as he has been taught—that is, in the book of Jeremy;[2] from which he preaches in all parts, being the apostle of the Benthamites. The smallest ornament or flourish is a sin with this school, and they draw their conclusions from their narrow premises with logical dryness and precision.

From Henry Taylor to Southey.

Downing Street: August 21, 1826.

Dear Mr. Southey,—It is a great satisfaction that the letter has been found.[3] Since you told me its purport I had reflected a good deal upon the subject, not with unmixed feelings, in considering the melancholy office assigned me; but certainly pleased with being selected for it, as I should be with any token of friendship between us. As to qualifications, I do not know what is requisite; at present I possess none that I know of, further than the acquaintance which you

[1] 'The story of the bear and the fiddle
Is begun, but breaks off in the middle.'—*Hudibras.*

[2] Jeremy Bentham.

[3] Asking me to be his executor.—*H. T.*

mention with yourself and with your poems. If the qualifications are ever required, possibly at that time more may be forthcoming. But I become every day more doubtful whether it will not be my fate to live and die an ignorant man. Few men of my age, and equally capable with myself of application and reflection, are so deficient in this respect, and that in spite of advantages of education which, though interrupted after my thirteenth year, would have laid strong foundations for a more active mind to build upon. I dare say you are not aware how small is my stock of knowledge. It is not that I have not applied myself to reading ; at times I have read laboriously. Often, when nothing has been over agreeable to me, reading has been as agreeable as anything else. But I have wanted that curiosity and lively interest in the pursuit which makes reading turn to account. And the feeling of *Cui bono?* (feeling I call it, for it is temperament that suggests the question, though reason cannot well answer it) has mingled itself much with my existence almost as far back as I can remember. My constitution has strengthened of late ; but with that change have come calls upon the mind for other exertions. I render you this account because I have no confidence in your forming a correct judgment of your friends, prone as you are to see all that you would desire in them.

As to discrepance of opinion, I dare say it is, as you observe, of no consequence in this matter, and in some points I may, as you anticipate, come to agree

with you in time, whether from a further knowledge, a truer judgment, or a change in the circumstances upon which the opinions are to be formed. But there is a discrepance in our natures which time cannot wear away, and the discrepance of opinion originating in that will remain. Our opinions cannot, on any subject, be more opposite than are, on all subjects, the manners in which we come by them and the moods in which we maintain them. Your opinions were the growth of many years when I first saw you, but from some observation of the habitual action of your mind and its laws and customs, I can easily imagine how your opinions were first formed—the eager and rapid grasp with which every system congenial with a happy nature was caught, the fond and firm belief with which it was held; how all knowledge was devoured and digested, and how the busy absorbents opened their mouths upon the chyme, taking up all that would nourish and support the system, rejecting all that would undermine it. Looking back to the formation of opinions in myself as far as such an operation can be said to have taken place, I perceive from the first a watchful distrust of every good feeling which arose in my own or appeared in other minds, a captious scrutiny of any notions which presented themselves in a confident shape. I see sentiments, ideas, and opinions float and fluctuate; subjects of doubt and speculation, and of reasoning and counter-reasoning, which showed them in all lights and consigned them back to

darkness. With any natural impulse of pleasure came the inquiry how and why it was a pleasure, and through what delusion. All these habits, you will say, are the natural infirmities of youth in an advanced state of society, and time, with a good constitution, will get the better of them. Some of them I too consider to be belonging to youth, but much is belonging to the original and indefeasible nature of the being. It is time that what is adrift by reason of youth should be settling, and accordingly some opinions have already got into soundings, and a few are moored head and stern. As I advance in life I shall probably continue to fix my opinions upon the subjects to which I shall be led to allot a large portion of my time and attention; but these must of necessity be few; the constitution of the mind will remain in my latter days, and when 'the sound of the grinding is low' many of my opinions will be no faster in my head than my grinders.

I am to be cured of Political Economy with ease and expedition, because I have it in a mild form. If you mean that I have not a full knowledge of the value of that science you have mistaken the diagnostics. This I do not reckon amongst my *opinions*—loose or fast—any more than I reckon amongst them my knowledge of light and darkness; neither could you entertain a doubt if you would consent to open your eyes upon the science. This is the only subject upon which *I* am entitled to expect that *you* will come round, for I have striven to understand it

according to my means. If I have but a slight acquaintance with the science and with the truths which it teaches, and if the two philosophers and the several professors in it have taught those truths imperfectly, and taught error along with them, the defect belongs to the teacher, or the learner, or to the immaturity of the science; for it is certain that by patient investigation and adequate powers of intellect the errors may be cleared away and the truths made manifest to every man who is capable of understanding demonstration. It is, I assure you, impossible that you can be aware of the irrefragable nature of the proofs whereupon the principles of Political Economy are founded, and whereby the science may be, and ought to be, and by its greatest masters has been, at almost every step carried forward, or you would not think it possible to make light of it any more than you would think of putting down the elements of Euclid. It is an arduous and an unattractive branch of study, and, having these disadvantages, it would be unfortunate if they who have influence with those who are in quest of knowledge should discourage its cultivation. Governments are not the first to learn, and it is desirable that they should know what they do, and not continue to cast the materials of society into new shapes and aspects, with as little prescience of what they are to produce as if it were the twirling of a kaleidoscope. Nor, if all this had been unknown to me, could I have supposed that the pursuit was a matter of youthful

infatuation ; for when I went home two months ago, there was my father, a man whose powers of reasoning I never encounter without feeling the inferiority of my own and of all others which it has been my lot to meet with, sitting with Say, Sismondi, Garnier, Malthus, Ricardo, and several more at his elbow, taking a third reading of Adam Smith to begin with, and, having been in his youth familiar with the old economists, French and English, looking forward on the other side of fifty with much satisfaction to employing a year or two in settling his mind on the points at issue between them and the new. I heartily wish that I could reckon as confidently upon such perseverance in myself as I can upon the improvement to be derived from it.

On the Irish Catholic Question (I care for no other) it is possible that we may some time think alike. At some future time it may be a different question from the present. If the crisis of blood and horrors, which you are looking to, should arrive, I may not think that the same course should be pursued after it, as I shall probably continue to think ought to have been adopted to avert it. Assuredly I shall not think that the denial of the Catholic claims could have produced any such crisis, or that the grant of them could have prevented it. What I consider that the question ought to be I have seen stated under your own hand in the first volume of the 'Edinburgh Annual Register.' 'For these people,' you there say, 'Catholic Emancipation can do nothing, a Catholic establishment might

do much ; but, though it would remove much misery, it would perpetuate so much evil that it is no more to be thought of than Harrington's extraordinary proposal of selling Ireland to the Jews.' I know of nothing that would afford a less prospect of perpetuity to the Catholic religion in Ireland than a Catholic establishment, nor anything short of fire and sword that can root it out as things are. We do not pretend to have it in our choice to make the people Protestants, for we never try. What means are employed, or ever will be employed, or, with a people kept in the condition of the Irish, can be efficacious for converting them ? But whilst they continue Catholics they cannot be instructed by Protestant teachers ; and thus by the deprivation of knowledge (not of powers and privileges, I allow) we are exposing a suffering people to the horrors of seeking by force a relief which is not ours to bestow. The real source of their sufferings is their habit of living and breeding upon potato-garths, a habit which has produced at length the result of an inordinate population living upon a kind and quantum of subsistence between which and famine-diet there is but one degree. Without an abstraction of population or an influx of capital there is no help for this. The latter cannot be induced at all, nor the former effected, I doubt, to any considerable extent. But with a priesthood less debased by penury, and depending upon Government for what they should receive, competent, therefore, to teach those who *from them* would be willing to learn, the

people would become less liable to misapprehend their case, and might thus be delivered from war, though not from pestilence and famine. As to the evils of the Catholic religion, be they as enormous as they may, Ireland has to undergo them. No one affects to hope for her conversion under the present nor under any future circumstances which are yet above the horizon of human foresight. We are not, therefore, to lose ourselves in the vain longing for what is out of reach, but to do all we can to save them in their present peril. That 'all' consists in extending to them the means of instruction through the channels by which alone they will consent to receive it.

When the people shall be sufficiently civilized the Reformation may make its way in Ireland, as it did in other countries, through the merits of Protestantism. In the meantime some of the attributes of Catholicism, which under other circumstances are evil, will be either neutral or good. Amongst savages the influence of a false religion and a fraudulent priesthood may be better than a total abandonment to savage passions. With most savages it is only superstition and imposture that would be successful: a purer religion could not enter their minds until they should be reclaimed from the savage state.

Do you recollect our saying a few words upon this question after tea in a corner of the *salle à manger* at Ostend (an Englishman vociferating the while that he was ready to pay what was just and reasonable, but objected to being imposed upon)?

What you said then is consistent with what I find in the 'Edinburgh Annual Register.' It is there written :[1] 'The question, in fact, resolves itself into this, Are the Catholics right in those great and essential points of doctrine and discipline wherein they differ from the Church of England, or are they wrong?' Now I think this is a question on which we have no right to determine; I think it is a violation of the first principles of liberty and justice to arrogate such a right. I do not mean, of course, that we may not have as strong an opinion upon the subject as we please, but that, though acting upon it where ourselves are concerned, we are bound to respect the independence of others, and that no such opinion can justify an encroachment upon national rights and liberties. But I further maintain that it is the right of every nation to require that the national funds allotted to support a ministry of religion be employed in supporting ministers of the same religious persuasion with the nation itself; and if it be said that Ireland is not a nation, but a part of one, bound to abide by what a majority of the whole shall determine, what is this but to assert the right of a conqueror to oppress? I think, then, that the continued misapplication of such of the Irish Church revenues as are not private property and would be disposable by the public on the deaths of incumbents, is a dereliction of moral principle, and, politically considered, an act of oppression whereby men will be,

[1] By Southey.

as they have been, made to live in barbarian ignorance and to die by the sword and the scaffold.

In the conversation which I have alluded to, you said, I recollect, on my alleging the moral principles which in my mind bore upon the case, that the Irish were no more fit to choose their own religion than the slaves in the West Indies were fit for liberty. I admit that. Now in my ethics expediency is the foundation of all right and wrong, and I have some time ago come to the conclusion (this very case of the slaves having led me to it), that in matters comprehending vast and permanent interests of humanity it may be justifiable to revert, past the great rules of morality, to the original principle of expediency from which they are derivatives—that is, in some rare cases of transcendent importance it may be justifiable to sacrifice to the expediency of the *case* the expediency of holding sacred those great rules of conduct by which it is good that men should be governed. By this doctrine only could the transient continuance of slavery in the West Indies be supported; but when this case was brought as a precedent for what is done to Ireland, I felt how dangerous the doctrine is, and how much evil there is to follow from every case which requires its application. Once apply it where its necessity is manifest to all men, and every man will apply it where the necessity appears manifest to himself. It is not to questionable cases, to cases which can ever be matter of dispute between parties, that its application should

be admitted. In the West India case I hold it to be admissible because, whatever is disputed in that case, all men are agreed on the paramount expediency of deferring emancipation.

You will ask how knowledge is to be given to a people through the ministers of a religion of which it is a principle to keep men in ignorance. I admit that it is the interest, and, therefore, the principle of the Catholic religion to keep men ignorant on certain points, and for the safety of that object to keep them generally ignorant to a certain extent, but not to an extent which casts them loose from moral government; that is the interest only of a vicious and destitute priesthood, and of a priesthood themselves so ignorant that they cannot teach, and that knowledge in their flock would shame them.

This is a question which, as you seem to expect, we may both live to see the end of; for never did cause in the Court of Chancery call for adjudication more badly than the cause of Ireland does. To the question which comes last (of those you advert to), death only can give a certain answer. I am sensible of the benefits of religion, but not as one who has tasted of them. I appreciate them coldly and imperfectly doubtless, estimating what is alien from my own nature by reason and observation of others' experience, in such manner as he can apprehend the objects of a sense who has been born without the organ. It is no idle vanity which has made me an unbeliever. I have not taken pride in meta-

physics, or piqued myself on any fancied strength of my reasoning faculty. I never knew what it was to have a devotional feeling, and reason, therefore, had nothing to overcome. My satisfaction with life must rest, I fear, on somewhat precarious foundations. Yet the enjoyments of life are real so long as one puts faith in the objects of human hope and desire, and I have long endeavoured to discipline my mind so as not to trace them too far or consider them too closely. I have earthly interests which I shall not reason away. And if ever aspirations after a future existence shall appear to find footing, and the names, which seem to me now nothing more, shall impress a meaning in my mind or excite a sentiment of happiness and hope, the progress of such a change will not meet with resistance (I trust) from any vain and miserable ambition of philosophising.

Yours affectionately,

H. T.

From Henry Taylor to Edward Villiers.

Suffolk Street: October 15, 1827.

The matter is that, being buried one morning in the 'Enchiridium Metaphysicum' of H. Morus, and much taken up with the scholastic scorn wherewith he insists that ghosts are ghosts, in opposition to the idle dreams of Cartesius and Vaninus, who took them to be the 'exuviæ aut effluvia rerum,' and being all unconscious the while that the fire was out, the window

open, and the door ajar, it befel that I was seized with certain shiverings, which were followed by fever and sickness, of which the natural consequences were emetics, diaphoretics, and cathartics, all which reduced me to a condition in which Morus would have showed me in triumph to Cartesius and Vaninus, and assured them of the existence of a ghost, though perhaps they might have retorted that I was clearly an effluvium of myself.

You are the first person from whom I have heard a word in favour of Scott's 'Napoleon,' and I am really glad to hear some good of it, as I was afraid it was too probable that he *had* been book-making. The defect which you mention is attributable to the defect of moral force in Scott's character ; invariable candour and moderation in judging men is generally accompanied by such a defect. Scott seems to be always disposed to approve of rectitude of conduct and to acquiesce in the general rules of morality, but without any instinctive or unconquerable aversion from vice—witness his friendship for Byron. Power of the imagination in conceiving and depicting strongly a great variety of characters seems scarcely compatible with a strong individuality of character in the person possessing that power. It is some simple headstrong qualities which make a strong character. Universality of opinions, and especially of sympathies, the one generally arising out of extended knowledge, the other out of the poetic sensibilities, are compatible enough with the power of *conceiving* a

strong character, but not with that of being it. I should like much to have read the 'Napoleon' with you. He would make no bad hero of the wicked ambitious kind. Ambition always excites interest in romance, the reason being that a reader takes the strongest interest in that person who takes the strongest interest in himself, and nothing is more intensely selfish than ambition. The sacrifices and discomfitures of such a person the reader is conscious must excite the strongest feelings, and they have, therefore, his strongest sympathies.

From Henry Taylor to a Friend.[1]

March 3, 1830.

Byron, in journalising, makes a whimsical remark upon Southey, whom he had met with in London long before their quarrel. He says Southey is very prepossessing and epic in appearance. 'To have had that poet's head and shoulders I would almost have written his sapphics.' Byron had, however, no mean opinion of his own head and shoulders. I should rather say that he had a sort of sentimental attachment to them.

I have a letter from Southey to-day, in reply to one of mine enclosing him an extract of Byron's journal, or rather three extracts, for there is further mention of Southey. He says he has a vivid remembrance of their first meeting, and there was an

[1] The address has been lost.

insidious softness in Byron's manner which made him compare it at the time to a tiger patting something which had not angered him with his paw, the talons being all sheathed; 'and the prevailing expression in his fine countenance was something which distrusted you, and which it never could have been possible for you or me to trust. I saw him three or four times, and retained the first impression so strongly that, though much pressed by Rogers to remain one day longer in town for the purpose of meeting him at dinner at one of his little parties, I declined it.'

After all, I think Moore makes Byron as interesting as one whose nature was essentially ignoble can be. You would find the book worth reading.

From James Stephen[1] *to Henry Taylor.*

Ryde, Isle of Wight: August 7, 1830.

. . . . I respect your diligence. I take a criminal delight in your satire, and have the utmost possible indulgence for your 'rough temper.' For I have been reading your manuscript again, and cheerfully acknowledge that a man who is capable of such things has a right to grumble over the daily drudgery by which he earns his bread. One of the few books which ornament my single shelf here is a little edition of Cowley, to whom I am disposed to pay greater homage than is perhaps his due. Opening it just

[1] Afterwards Sir James Stephen.

now, as your letter was lying by me, I was amused with the application which occurred to me of the scolding which he receives from his Muse in a little poem called 'The Complaint' :—

> When I resolved t' exalt thy anointed name
> Among the spiritual Lords of peaceful fame,
> Thou changeling, thou, bewitched with noise and show,
> Wouldst into courts and cities from me go;
> Wouldst see the world abroad, and have a share
> In all the follies and the tumults there;
> Thou wouldst, forsooth, be something in a State,
> And business thou wouldst find, and wouldst create,
> Business, the frivolous pretence
> Of human lusts, to shake off Innocence—
> Business, the grave impertinence,
> Business, the thing which I of all things hate,
> Business, the contradiction of thy fate.

I hope every line is a stab to you. For my own share, I defy the Muses and all their reproaches, for no man living can accuse me of having ever plighted my troth, or of having broken any vows to them. Except the before-mentioned little volume of Cowley, and a very pretty collection of religious poetry, written for the most part in and before the reign of Elizabeth, for the importation of which into the Isle of Wight my wife is responsible, I have not a single couplet in print or in manuscript about me. My library consists of Hume's 'Laws of the Customs,' Hertslet's 'Commercial Treaties,' a volume of Calvin's 'Institutes,' Ludlow's 'Memoirs,' Barclay's 'Apology,' Bolingbroke's 'Remarks on English History,' Hoadly's 'Sermons,' and Luther's 'Commentary on the Galatians,' a very religious catalogue I perceive as I read

the titles from the chimney-piece before me. But do not, therefore, accuse me of blowing a trumpet before me, for if my opinions and prejudices were precisely opposite to what they are, I should always read religious books when opportunity offered, as I find in none other such extraordinary subtlety of reasoning, so much habitual elevation of thought, and so thorough a sifting of all the questions which, whatever is to be our condition hereafter, have, even with reference to our present state of existence, the most intense and durable interest. I do not believe that the whole range of literature has anything more admirable, or which better repays attention, than that mixture of earnest eloquence and metaphysical acuteness which distinguishes the writings of the great masters in modern theology—modern I mean as contradistinguished from the Apostolical Fathers, of whom, alas ! I know nothing but the names. One had need have some ( )[1] of this kind amongst these celebrated prospects, which I do not mean to disparage, having myself a reasonable share of satisfaction in them, and a genuine reverence for those who find in such things alone the materials of happiness. But mine is at bottom a Londonised metropolitan taste, which delights more in reading of the impressions which Nature has produced on her real worshippers than in worshipping her in person. There is, however, much evil in yielding entirely to this propensity, and I trust that before the autumn

[1] A tear in the paper here.

has spent itself you will carry your mind down to Westmoreland to be hauled over and repaired, as was the case with some of the great ships which I saw in Portsmouth Harbour this morning. Your body will be all the better for the change. I declare to you that it sometimes occurs to me as an inexplicable phenomenon, that, penned up as we are day after day in the same narrow fold, for months and years together, we—I mean not you and I, but the collective fraternity at Downing Street—do not lay aside all natural goodwill and good manners too, from irksomeness of seeing the same faces and debating the same subjects. The conclusion is that we must be a very amiable and courteous set of persons.

I rejoice that Villiers is re-elected. With wise management he will make himself a considerable and very useful member of society, but much circumspection is necessary to his success. The only other friends I have in Parliament who are not already secure in their seats are Charles Grant and Dr. Lushington. My affection for the former, and my hearty esteem for the Doctor, would make me bewail their disappointment if Government influence should triumph against them. We country folks speculate with all our might, and to little purpose, to discover whether King Charles X. has been acting from mere desperation or from some more recondite motive. I incline to believe that he judged rightly that a revolution was imminent, and that the overthrow of his family was to be averted, if at all, by nothing but a

civil war. I am disposed to think that he was right also in judging that the only chance of success in such a contest was to plunge into it audaciously. That he was utterly mistaken in his estimate of the strength of his own party is much more clear, and, in my apprehension at least, it was a woful error to think the object itself worth such a price, even if civil war could have secured the Bourbon dynasty. But there is in all this an undercurrent, unseen but irresistible, which is working its way towards a great change in the state of European society, and probably in the state of the world at large. Mankind are rapidly becoming too knowing to be ruled by prejudices, at least by the prejudices of former ages, and are not sufficiently virtuous or enough at ease to submit to the dominion of religion or philosophy. I anticipate at no distant day a military despotism more severe than the world has hitherto known in proportion to the unexampled energy of the intellectual force which it will have to repress. These, however, are Isle of Wight politics.

I have been scribbling, or rather the cause of scribbling,[1] a great many words, which will at least serve to show that, even when I have nothing to tell, it is a pleasure to hold communication with you.

I am, my dear Taylor, very truly yours,

JAMES STEPHEN, JUN.

[1] The letter was dictated.

From Henry Taylor to Miss Fenwick.

Doncaster : October 30, 1830.

My dear Cousin,—We had a cold day's journey of it after we left you—about such another day as you will have, I suppose, over Alston Moor on Monday. I was tired enough before we got to York, but Southey's spirits had risen upon finding himself fairly off, and we took to our beds at York, and took the morning there to-day to look at the work of our Bedlam friend Jonathan Martin. The repairs are in progress, and will probably be completed by the time the Revolutionary Jonathans are ready to renew the attack. After seeing the Minster, we went to hunt for old books ; and whilst Southey was looking over a catalogue at one of the booksellers' shops, a countryman came in and asked the shopman for 'Deathantleddy.' The demand puzzled the shopman, and the countryman could not make him understand what he wanted ; but Southey looked up off his catalogue and said, 'Oh, "Death and the Lady" you want ; it is an old song : I can sing it,' and he began to repeat a verse or two. 'It is an old ballad ; I can recollect my mother singing it fifty years ago. I am afraid you won't get it here ; it is a ballad in one long sheet.' The countryman seemed astonished at receiving this account of 'Death and the Lady,' and began to say it surely could not be so old as that, as if he was ashamed to have asked for anything so old ; but Southey was quietly conning his cata-

logue again. The two shopmen were staring, and I was laughing, so the countryman took himself off without 'Death and the Lady,' supposing that he had done something ridiculous in asking for so old a song. It was a comical scene; and, as Southey had to leave his name with the direction for sending his purchases to Keswick, I dare say the shopman would remember it. I saw that after we had left the shop one of them came out to look at him.[1]

At Doncaster here to-night we had a scene in a barber's shop which made us laugh. Two men were being shaved, and over the chimney-piece was a portrait, of which the head only was finished and the body was just washed over with white, as if a ground only had been made to paint upon. The face was beautifully painted, and might have been by the hand of a master; it caught my eye as we passed the shop, which seemed of the meanest description, and we went in to look at it, and found by the barber's account that it had been given to him by a friend who thought that it might represent a man sitting down to be shaved, with a white cloth thrown over him and tucked under his chin; and the fact was that nothing could represent it better; but the barber had been told by some person whose attention it had attracted in passing, as it did ours, that it was an unfinished portrait of Garrick, and when the name was

[1] Southey writes to his wife that he has chided himself for not asking the countryman his name and address, that he might send him a copy of the ballad. In the same letter he tells of the discovery of Garrick's portrait.

mentioned Southey immediately recognised Garrick's face. There was something very absurd in the contrast between the actual patients of the barber who were sitting there in the flesh and the unfortunate Garrick, who had little thought when he sat for the picture to what vile uses he might come. . . . .

Ever your affectionate,

H. T.

From Henry Taylor to Miss Fenwick.

Downing Street : November 16, 1830.

Yesterday I dined with Southey, and Sadler was one of the company, whom I did not find much more agreeable than I had expected from his books and his speeches that he would be. In manner and delivery he gave me very much the idea of an itinerant lecturer, whose lecture for the evening had not been particularly well got up. He talked slowly, clumsily, and continually, and when he stumbled in his talk and broke down he got slowly up again and tried to do better, without appearing to be sensible that anything awkward had happened to him, or that everybody had hoped and expected that the breakdown would finish him. After tea, however, he got warmer and more flexible in his discourse and more fluent, and at the same time not so hopelessly continuous, and seemed as if at times he might be agreeable, and at some other times silent.

Yesterday I had a party at breakfast to meet Southey; it was an odd assemblage for the contrariety of its elements. You would have liked to be there to see how extremes meet. There were Southey and John Mill, far as the poles asunder in politics, but somewhat akin in morals and in habits of literary industry; there was Charles Greville, noted for being the handsomest and idlest man of *haut ton* about town, and next him sat S——, whom to look at you would suppose to have been made and fattened expressly to represent substantial citizenship; an Elliot and a Villiers, as little of a match, and myself as the crowning inconsistency. However, they were all able men, and for that reason did well together, understood each other, and talked copiously and well.

November 27, 1830.

I am sorry that you will not see Southey so soon as I had hoped you might, but I dare say he will not be long in fulfilling his intention of coming amongst you. He is very tired of London, being in great request and very grand. The Duchess of Kent had been lying in wait for him for some reason unknown to him, and he dined with her on Wednesday and liked her much, and liked also Leopold, with whom he had a great deal of conversation; and the little Princess was brought in to tell him that she had read his life of Nelson, and she was pretty and lively. They seemed to him to be as unconcerned about the state of affairs, and passing their days as pleasantly, as Marie Antoinette in her time of coming troubles.

From Henry Taylor to Southey.

Downing Street : February 10, 1831.

It is possible Mill may have used the expression you mention some years ago, though the tone of it is unlike him at any time of his life when I have known him, and our acquaintance began, I think, when he was about nineteen years of age. Latterly I do not believe that he would propagate in any way, or suffer himself lightly to express any opinion which could tend to the disturbance of religious faith. Certainly, a person who has no religious opinions or feelings must labour under a great disadvantage in forming his judgment of political affairs. He must be deficient in an essential portion of the knowledge of human nature and the constitution of human society ; for an *appreciating* knowledge of the influences of religion can never be attained by mere observation or by any intellectual process. But I think that the views of a philosophical mind, even when thus essentially defective, may be nevertheless valuable. There are many opinions connected with political affairs and the state of society which may be justly formed by such a mind, and many which, though fallacious, may present matter worthy of consideration. I would not certainly ' take ' the opinions of such a person upon any of the vital interests of society—that is, I would not take them without a great many grains of salt ; but I would take them into consideration and endeavour to see what truth there was in them. I

have always thought that you formed your opinions at a disadvantage, from a disposition to seek and adopt what was confirmatory of those to which you are disposed, and not to look about much for any other, and wholly to reject what came from an antagonist, or with a hostile purpose. A man may find truth mixed up even with the mud that is flung upon him ; he may find it billeted upon a poisoned arrow. And he will find in this way just that sort of truth which he would be likely otherwise to miss. I would always rather read what makes against my opinions than what coincides with them ; I would read according to my want, not in the line of my abundance.

Have you read the article against the Economists in the ' Quarterly ' ? I think very highly of it.

Ever yours affectionately,

H. T.

From Henry Taylor to Miss Fenwick.

February 14, 1831.

Southey left town about ten days ago for Hampshire, where he wrote an article for the ' Quarterly Review ' on the state of affairs. He sent it up to Murray through me, and I think it is a piece of the most brilliant writing that ever proceeded from the pen of a man of genius. It must, I think, make a great noise in this world at this time, not so much for the genius there is in it—for the world looks little to that

on its own account—as for the theme, and the times, and the direction of his genius in all its abundant force on public characters and prevalent opinions, which he deals with according to his usual uncompromising fashion. The article was written, all but five pages, in the nine days that he was down in Hampshire, and when you see it you will say that he had made good use of his time. It will be out in a few days, and we shall have the old cry up again about his fierce, presumptuous, rabid intolerance, which will be all the same thing to him as if they were commending him to the skies. He had need be indifferent to public opinion, for no man ever acted in such open defiance of it, or cast so wholly aside any thought of conciliating it. The 'Times' has been putting out complimentary paragraphs about him lately, one of them within the last three weeks, and he owns it to be in this age of journalism the most influential of journals; and in this article he calls it the most notoriously profligate, and consistent in nothing but malice and mischief. The 'Times' will no doubt have a few words to say in answer to that. The 'Literary Gazette,' which can do almost anything to the sale of a book, put forth some highly commendatory articles upon his 'Colloquies,' and a little while after appeared in the newspapers an epigram upon the editor by Robert Southey for a criticism in the 'Gazette' upon Lamb.[1]

[1] This epigram on Jerdan was printed in the *Athenæum*. A copy of it in Southey's handwriting is in my possession.

Lord Brougham has written him a long letter to consult him upon what steps the Government can take to encourage literature. Southey says he shall tell him that the Government have something else to do. This same Lord Brougham being Lord Chancellor, and in that capacity standing beside the King when Southey went to Court the other day, took that opportunity of cordially shaking hands with him, never having seen him in his life before, though he had often, and with as much cordiality, abused him.

Poor Howick ! never man was more calumniated than he was by me and my informants. He is able, unassuming, active, honest, and ardent. At least, all this he seems to be just now. And accordingly I write my fingers off for his information. But that is nothing when one sees things *done*. The lame and impotent conclusion it is only which makes one think one's time wasted.

Ever yours affectionately,

H. T.

From Henry Taylor to his Mother.

76 Lower Grosvenor Street : Sunday, March 19, 1831.

You need not distress yourself about my having so much to think of and do. It does no harm to my health. I never recollect to have been better in health than I am now. It is true that I cannot pretend to be fitted by Nature for the species of activity which circumstances render it necessary for

me to exercise; but Nature has been kind enough to indemnify me by a gift of sleeping which is peculiar to myself. The winding up of this last week would furnish a specimen of the way in which things right themselves. For the last two or three days I had been making great exertions; I had been dictating to two clerks at once at the office, with not less than half a dozen persons a day coming to me—of whom I was obliged to admit two or three—to break the two threads of my dictation; I had one clerk at home to dictate to in the evening till after midnight, and another at breakfast to go on with till office hours. One day I talked to Lord Goderich for five mortal hours almost without interruption, and the other days I had talkings of no small magnitude to get through. Then came Saturday evening, seven o'clock, and the bags must be sealed and the mails be despatched, and the packet must sail, and ten days or a fortnight must elapse before another *crisis* occurs. So last night at seven o'clock I came home relieved from all immediate pressure, and tolerably careless as to all matters for the next mail; drank my tea; tried to read Dr. Channing's essay upon Milton, could not manage it; went to bed at half-past eight, slept for twelve hours, and arose this morning, not perhaps quite a strong man and hearty, but with strength as usual according to my constitution, in which I did not find any trace of either a hole or a patch. At my seasons of greatest exertion I do no more than Stephen does every day of his life; the difference is

that he is aptly constituted for it, and goes through everything with an active equanimity—with all intellectual vigour but no nervous excitement; whilst I do it with a spirit of eagerness and impatience, fighting against interruptions, never quiet but when I am working at home, and thus undergoing necessarily frequent alternations of languor.

Now as to the comparison between the political and poetical way of life. Circumstance, 'that unspiritual god and mis-creator,' seems to have pretty well settled which life I shall lead in the main. Still, however, you would allow me a little poetry as a relaxation or a pleasure. Poetical exercitation, when it is pursued to any purpose, must always—with me, at least, and I should think with every person who has any turn for it—be a pleasure; but it never can be a relaxation from intellectual effort. The pleasures of poetical composition must be placed, I think, pre-eminently in the category of exciting and exhausting pleasures.

To resort to poetry at times of fatigue from business is out of the question therefore; the spontaneous excitability of mind which is required for the pursuit is not to be found at such times. My principal resource has been in my Sundays, but of late these too have been entirely engrossed by business. I shall endeavour to recover them by-and-by, when the consequences of T—— are got rid of in Downing Street, and I shall devote a portion of my holidays to the completion at least of what is begun in the poetical way. You say that, unless I had a talent of

the very highest order, the results of my poetical efforts would be mortifying to me ; and that my own estimation of my productions would not prove enough to me, and the pleasure of the occupation would pass away, and the sense of its inutility to mankind would succeed. To a talent of the highest order I make no pretension. I think that under more favourable circumstances I might write plays which would be better than those which have been written during the last two centuries—I mean since the year 1630—even perhaps better plays than those of Massinger, Chapman, Shirley, Ford, Marlowe, and Ben Jonson. That they would attract present notice I should think very problematical, and as to 'Prince Posterity,' those who place their reliance there have the great advantage of hopes which by their very nature can never be corrected by experience, and which are indefeasible by any accident or worldly neglect, so long as faith fails not ; but I am sorry to say that it is a matter of utter indifference to me what may be said of me or my productions, if it be not to be said till I am out of hearing. If, therefore, I could entertain any expectations from posterity, they would not afford me the pleasures of hope. This is not only an enjoyment wanting, but I fear an indication also of a contracted and, as far as some of the highest powers are concerned, an imbecile state of the imaginative faculty ; and posthumous fame has perhaps been seldom or ever enjoyed by a person who did not wish for it. However that be, the assurance of such fame, even if

I could have it, would be an empty one to me, and I must look, therefore, to some other repayment of my poetical exertions. The present pleasure is all that I can be sure of, and I think that this may suffice. I do not agree with you that they could expose me to much mortification; I do not speak without experience when I say that unsuccessful publication would give me no annoyance worth mentioning. The ill success of 'Comnenus' could not possibly have been more complete, and it seemed really to be nothing more to me than the absence of the pleasure which I should have taken in its better success. It did not give me a disagreeable feeling that I can recollect, but rather a feeling of satisfaction and gratified vanity, I suppose it should be called, in finding by experience that I was, as I had always believed myself to be, insusceptible, to any extent worth considering, of mortification from such a cause. Perhaps as one proceeds in life, and can look with less reason to improvement of one's powers and reparation of one's failures, one should expect disappointments to come more home to one's feelings and to be more subversive of one's hopes and persuasions; but still I cannot till I have experienced it bring myself to believe that I should be unhappy about the ill success of a publication. And though success in publication may have been the end which I proposed to myself when I began to write, we know how in the natural course of many pursuits the means are converted into the end, and the pursuit continues to afford gratification even sometimes in an

increased degree when we are conscious that the originally proposed end is never to be attained, or when, if attainable, it has lost its attractiveness. The idea of the pleasure to be found in the spending of money must have been originally connected in the mind of a miser with the pleasure which he takes in hoarding it, but the pleasure of hoarding continues when the pleasure of spending has been long lost sight of. For my part, I shall probably not publish again for some years to come, and thus the inutility of writing will remain for that time *en vague*, and I shall have acquired the habitual sort of pleasure before I am conclusively disabused upon the subject.

From Henry Taylor to Miss Fenwick.

London: May, 1831.

I have seen a good deal more of Wordsworth than I ever saw before; I feel as if one could have a great deal of regard for him. I have had three or four breakfasts for him, and he is as agreeable in society as he is admirable in his powers of talking, so perfectly courteous and well-bred and simple in his manners. He met Jeffrey the other day at Sir J. Mackintosh's, and at Jeffrey's request they were introduced. Lockhart beheld the ceremony, and told me that Wordsworth played the part of a man of the world to perfection, much better than the smaller man, and did not appear to be conscious of anything having taken place between them before. I wish you were in

London now, when you might see as much of him as you liked. He spends his time wholly in society, mixing with all manner of men, and delighting in various women, for he says his passion has always been for the society of women. Two seem to have made a deep impression upon him since he came to town—one Mrs. Robert Grant, whom he met at a party, but unfortunately could not get an opportunity of speaking to; the other, a Miss Julia or Miss Adelaide Campbell, I don't know which, with whom the Borghis are acquainted.

From Henry Taylor to Southey.

Downing Street: September 29, 1831.

I went up to Highgate the other day with Mill, Stephen, and Elliot, to pay an auscultatory visit to Coleridge. Poor man, he has been for two months past under the influence of cholera and other extra disorders, by which he seems sadly enfeebled and even crippled. One heard from him, however, things which could have come from no one else; not such continuous and unintermitted eloquence as I have sometimes heard from him, but the 'flash and outbreak of a fiery mind' from time to time. I was glad to show him to Stephen, who had not seen him before, and than whom I know of no one who has more of reverence for literary rank. As we came home discussing Coleridge, Stephen observed that it was a pity he should talk at all upon such subjects as the

National Debt, on which he was obviously so much less ripe than on subjects of criticism and others ; and Mill made a remark in which I thought there was justice, and of which I made a mental application which you will not be at a loss to guess : he said that on such subjects, which are for the most part mere matters of calculation, of plus and minus, a man must be either quite right or quite wrong, and if he was wrong on such subjects what he said was good for nothing, whereas he might be more or less wrong in discussing the moral and political relations of society and yet be very instructive, and if you could not agree with him, still he might lead you to take a survey of society from a new point of view, and impress you with many ideas and sentiments which could never have resulted to you from communication with a person whose conclusions were the same as your own. You might be enriched even by the materials of his erroneous structure.

From Henry Taylor to Southey.

Banstead : October 28, 1832.

I am rather wishing (what I know has often been your own wish) that you should withdraw from political writing. It seems to me that the rapid and extensive changes which are now taking place in society require that any man who writes on political affairs should devote his whole attention to them and live in their atmosphere. A casual glance, however

keen, will now no longer acquaint a man with the aspect of affairs. He who would understand them, to the extent and with the accuracy which is desirable in a writer upon them, should be not only a man of close and constant observation, but one who has the objects to be observed, or the sources of intelligence, incessantly under his eyes; a man mixing daily with the best informed society, *quoad hoc*, a man of many newspapers, to whom news is as his daily bread. I know men here in London who read eight or ten English and four or five French newspapers every day. I dare say there are many men who do so, and can do it without difficulty, at the Travellers' or the Athenæum. They are acquainted with politicians of various parties in this country, and they go over to Paris, and become personally acquainted with all the leading journalists and political actors or writers there. These men may or may not be turning their time to the best account in thus doing; but it is certain that any man who enters the lists with them upon their own subjects, without having had their opportunities or adopted their means of acquiring information, must contend with them at a very great disadvantage. I know men who have been in the practice of mixing with the mobs in France, and diligently conversing with men of all ranks and classes; and the impression which I have received from them of the state of mind and feeling amongst the workmen is the very opposite of yours. Personal observation, I allow, can

amount to little. What a man sees with his own eyes can seldom be very conclusive in a general sense. But to derive your impressions from a multitude of sources of second-hand information instead of from a few is certainly an essential advantage. The result of my investigation of the very few political questions on which I have had (as a matter of duty) to inform myself thoroughly, has been to render me very distrustful of any opinions on such subjects which are not formed under the sense of responsibility which arises from a consciousness that they are to be acted upon. The consciousness that they are to be written upon does not seem to create the same sense of responsibility, nor perhaps need it.

From Henry Taylor to Southey.

London : February 12, 1833.

As I promised yesterday, I send you the 'Letter to Lord Nugent' with my suggestions in pencil. The object of most of them is to remove some occasional familiarities and violences of style, which, without having any particular significancy in themselves, tend, I think, to lower the tone of the whole, and thereby to deprive more significant sallies in that kind of the relief in which they would otherwise stand out. In this sort of controversy the tone is always more important than the matters. Violence is to be especially eschewed ; and contempt, if it is to be believed to be genuine, must be, not expressed, but *betrayed*.

Express contempt passes merely for anger, and whatever the writer may say, and his friends may know of his coolness, the public, who can judge only by his words written, will always infer from *direct* charges of falsehood, baseness, &c., set forth in those express terms, that he is very much nettled indeed; and when that inference is once made the rest goes for little. I am convinced that the real way of abusing people with effect is by a studied forbearance, along with a covert significance of phrase; and that the superiority of this tone is especially felt when it comes in reply to an overt grossness of abuse on the other side. The strength which lies in moderation, and even in the outward appearance of it, is never more felt than upon these occasions; the lion couchant being in polemical literature always a more formidable beast than the lion rampant. It is with more or less reference to this principle of warfare, though not, I think, with more of it than will accord with the general plan of your letter, that most of my alterations have been suggested; but if you do not think them suitable, india-rubber is the easy remedy.

From Southey to Henry Taylor.

Keswick: March 2, 1833.

The opinion of my arrogance and intolerance has been taken up originally from the 'Edinburgh Review,' then from Lord Byron, and confirmed by the frequency with which ill-natured papers in the

'Quarterly Review' written by other persons have been ascribed to me. Jeffrey, I remember, once spoke of the arrogant manner in which I brought my pretensions forward, and this I noticed in the 'Letter to William Smith.' That letter, those concerning Lord Byron, some notes to the 'Carmen Triumphale' containing extracts from an unpublished letter to Brougham, and the 'Vindiciæ,' are the whole of my controversial writings up to this time. That the letter was called for by the provocation which had been given, no one, I think, need be told; and for the 'Vindiciæ,' I question whether any controversial volume was ever written in a better temper from the beginning to the end.

In reprinting my essays I omitted only a passage which had a personal bearing—and that related to poor Hone—who, the papers tell me, is stricken for death. It had been not only deserved but provoked; but he had turned afterwards from his evil ways; I had shaken hands with him; and whether he ever knew that the passage was expunged I know not, for till this moment I never mentioned it to any person. It was a mere act of feeling on my part, and I have been led to mention it now only for the sake of showing how little there was which, after a lapse of years, I saw any reason to omit or alter on the score of its severity.

The person who says that I never spare any one in my attacks might be told it would be more accurate to say that I am an ugly customer when driven

to defend myself. *Impiger* and *acer* are epithets which may be applied to me with truth, but certainly not *iracundus* nor *inexorabilis*. . . .

In the vexations of life it has often been a consolation with me to think how soon it will matter nothing whether things had taken that course or proceeded as I could have wished them to do. It will be the same to the world a hundred years hence whether Pelion is piled upon Ossa in your office at this time or not; but it will not be the same thing whether you wear yourself out in removing mountains (which, where it is to be done by works instead of faith, is a desperate task) or whether you have leisure to finish 'Philip van Artevelde.'

Your letters are both excellent. You have a power of exerting yourself and asserting your rights when necessary, which I am devoid of. This I saw at the Dover Custom House. Now I submit to any and everything rather than be engaged in any dispute that is not to be carried on quietly at my writing-desk.

From James Stephen to Henry Taylor.

Sea View, Ryde: August 11, 1833.

My dear Taylor,—I trust that amidst the silence of Colonial politics you are listening to a different inspiration with greater earnestness and attention than was possible in busier days. It is your own fault if you pass through life without establishing a

name of which your descendants (should you have any) would boast.

I am occupied in official business some hours daily from duty; with theology from choice; and with sailing about this strait with my belongings for amusement. A patriarch of my standing has no right to expect, and is unwise if he wishes for, any more intoxicating occupations of his time. It would not indeed be easy for me to be frivolous at present, even if frivolity were as much my besetting sin as I suppose it to be the reverse; for I am carrying about me daily and hourly the vivid recollection of the inestimable friend[1] I have lost which, though it produces no sadness, infallibly renders me serious. I long to write, though I know I never shall, an account of that admirable and most singular person. He was distinguished from the rest of mankind by his extreme susceptibility to every mode of pleasurable thought and feeling. I opened in Coleridge the other day (by-the-by, I am much indebted to you for those volumes) on a line which expressed his nature to perfection as far as it goes :—

> Delight in little things,
> The buoyant youth surviving in the man.

His power of extracting joy out of everything rendered his piety a spring of incessant gladness to himself, and a most bewitching charm to all who witnessed its exercises. It became a master passion, to which all other affections and every lower appetite

[1] Wilberforce, no doubt.—*H. T.*

were completely subjugated ; but it was that kind of subjection which left room for a well-regulated freedom. The result was a sort of filial confidence in the kindness of God, which permitted, and even encouraged, something not quite dissimilar from the light-hearted frolic which it is my greatest happiness to see my children enjoying in my company, and under such parental control as I am obliged to use. But there is no end of this kind of writing, although there is an end of my leisure at this moment ; for be it known to you that we are all going to dinner, and that I have been dictating this (to borrow from a friend of mine) in order to soothe the pangs of gazing at a yet uncovered tablecloth.

I am, my dear Taylor,
Always most truly yours,
JAS. STEPHEN.

From James Stephen to Henry Taylor.

Kensington Gore : November 3, 1833.

My dear Taylor,—Anxious as I am, even to an unreasonable degree, for your good opinion, yet this expression of it, however kindly and generously intended, has awakened a deeper sense of shame and regret than the keenest rebuke could have excited. The moral superiority which your conduct ascribes to me, still more emphatically than even your words, I have never claimed, simply because it does not belong to me. If you should think that I say this

in the hope of earning the additional praise of more than common modesty, you would do me injustice. Weighing my own character against that of other men in those scales which the Prophet calls 'the balance of the Sanctuary,' where an accurate allowance is made for natural temperament and infirmities, and for the influence of parental and other examples, the result is to fasten upon me convictions of which I will only say, that they render any self-applause at the expense of my neighbours impossible. I believe, indeed, that I have too often been diverted by these feelings from the performance of the duties I owe to my friends and associates. When witnessing conduct or language which my heart has condemned, it has appeared to me preposterous that the condemnation should be pronounced by *my* lips in the language of reproof. On the occasion to which you refer, I may more than once have been controlled and silenced by this habitual self-misgiving. Yet it is a very singular thing, that just before your note was put into my hands I had been confessing to my amanuensis, from whom I have no secrets, that I owed to you and to the Elliots an apology which I had resolved to make for having been hurried by the current of conversation to quote the witty, though profane, rebuke to the profaneness of Lord Thurlow. My heart had reproached me for making that allusion, not only because it was irreverent, but because it might have induced some of you, my juniors in age, to suppose me insensible

to the duty of abstaining from all light mention of the sacred Name or mysterious purposes of the Almighty. You see, therefore, that we have to interchange confessions, and that I have as much to be forgiven as to forgive.

Although it would be easy for me to write a volume on the general subject of the restraints which religion should impose on the tongue, or rather on the heart, I see no adequate motive for writing even a solitary sentence, because I fear we differ about the first principles of all. As that is a subject which I think you are unwilling to agitate, so I am not disposed to obtrude it upon you. What your opinions may be I can only conjecture. My own, not lightly taken up, nor adopted at all without an incessant conflict with constitutional scepticism, are that the religion of Jesus Christ affords the only plausible solution of the great mystery of human life, and the only solid foundation for any lofty or consolatory thoughts; and that unless the silence prevailing between man and all intelligences superior to his own has really been broken by the voice of inspiration, the Christian graces of faith and hope and charity have no place in this world of ours, but must be superseded by the antagonist vices of sensuality, despondency, and selfishness. She whose pen I am using well knows how deeply grateful I have ever felt towards you for a demeanour full of indulgence, kindness, and generosity. Would to God (the aspiration is hers as fully as my own) that

I could repay that obligation by inducing you to apply your great reasoning powers to the story of the only subject which a wise man can regard as of much moment, and to bring the imaginative and meditative faculties, with which you have been so richly endowed, to that topic from which alone inferior interests can derive real purity or grandeur ! But I forbear to pursue considerations which might lead me beyond the limits of sound discretion. May God bless you !

I am ever sincerely yours,

JAMES STEPHEN.

From Henry Taylor to J. G. Lockhart.

London : April 28, 1834.

Dear Lockhart,—I will answer as well as I can your enquiry as to the view psychological which I had before me in the character of Van Artevelde.

. . . . If I were allowed to dilate upon the ideal of Van Artevelde, I should say further thus : That it is an attempt to represent a combination (rare but not unnatural) of the contemplative powers of the mind with the practical, of philosophy with efficiency. That there is anything unnatural or impossible in the union of these attributes I think no one can aver who has read Bacon's book, 'De Negotiis,' and that the circumstances of Van Artevelde's life were compatible and congenial with such a combination might be made out from genuine history. It is perfectly

true that to fish with a rod and line in the Scheldt had been the chief pleasure and occupation of his life before he was involved in public affairs. He did not engage in them spontaneously, and, notwithstanding the advantageous introduction into public life which his birth might have ensured to him, he appears to have been entirely content to continue in privacy till the difficulties of the times almost compelled him forth of it. During that leisure of his earlier life his mind appears to have been more highly cultivated than was usual in his times ; for, in the words of Froissart, he was 'moult bien enlangagé et bien lui advenait' ; and the career and ultimate fate of his father must have supplied ample food for meditation to a naturally thoughtful mind. Upon these facts I rest his title to certain gifts of philosophy and to a turn for meditation which might at first sight seem to be out of keeping with the age.

I have not indeed intended to present in his person a specimen of the ordinary men of his times. Had such been my purpose, I am aware that the language in which he speaks should have been in some parts of the play less rhetorical, and that the habitual strain of thought ascribed to him should have been more crude and rude. But having in view the eminent endowments which history assigns to him, and the singular course of his life, from first to last, beginning and ending in such opposite extremes of contemplative tranquillity and energetic action, I have thought myself justified in considering him upon these points

rather as a substantive product of nature, than as the creature of contemporary circumstances, or as strictly in conformity with the times in which he lived. Thus much as to his philosophy.

Then as regards his competency to the business of life and the management of men, there is ample evidence that when he was at length induced to take a part in public affairs, he was found to be possessed of the necessary qualifications. 'He spake kindly to all whom he had to do with, and dealt so wisely that every man loved him,' is what is said of him by Froissart, who had certainly no partiality for demagogues in general, or for him. The whole of his public career shows that, although he may have been deficient in military skill, he had an extraordinary power over the minds and affections of his followers, and that this power was acquired by judgment, promptitude, and decision in putting an end to those who opposed him, as well as by generosity and concern for the public welfare—by making himself feared as well as by making himself loved.

That his manner of proceeding with regard to the two knights, Grutt and Bette, was adopted partly with this purpose appears in his conversation with Van den Bosch the night before; 'let us reveal this' (the terms about to be proposed by the two knights) 'to all our Aldermen and Captains, that they be to-morrow all ready apparelled in the Market Place, and then let us go into the Hall and a hundred men with us to hear the contents of the Treaty; and then let

me alone, so you will avow my deed and abide puissantly by me, *for unless we be feared among the Commons it is nothing.*' And to this end he killed the two knights without hesitation.

On the other hand, when the town came to its last extremity, 'Philip Van Artevelde had so much pity for the common people that, notwithstanding he had so highly displeased the Earl, yet he was willing to throw himself upon the Earl's mercy;' and he governed himself accordingly when the last offer of terms was made, in which it was not even pretended that his own life would be spared.

This his generosity may not perhaps tell in favour of his aptitude in point of understanding for the business of life; but neither this nor the general benevolence of his demeanour can tell against it, when considered in conjunction with his other proceedings; and the influence which he obtained cannot be accounted for by his acts of generosity and kindness only, or by anything taken separately from his knowledge of mankind and his competency to deal with them. 'You entreat the people,' Van den Bosch said to him, 'kindly and safely, as is commonly reported throughout the town; wherefore the people will live or die with you.' It was not kindness alone which could attach in such times such a people; practical abilities were, as I conceive, still more essential to the object. Such being my ideal of Van Artevelde, intellectually considered, I have endeavoured to keep his moral attributes and his

temperament in harmony with it. I have endeavoured to represent him as naturally kind and good, but, keeping in view the leading characteristic, I have never carried his feelings so far, or his virtuous principles so high, as materially to interfere with his efficiency. He is, or is meant to be, under all circumstances a statesman and a man of business. I have wished to paint him not as an example of nice and scrupulous morality, such as might befit an equally considerate moral agent of modern times, but as exhibiting some broad features of humanity and virtue ; as being in the main a high-minded, strong-minded, just, and merciful man.

In the second part I have sought to deepen the shade of tragedy by representing him in a state of some moral decline as well as with adverse fortunes to encounter. In the first, he had not been represented as having put on the incorruptible. In the second, though he retains his strength and generosity of nature, yet the business of life, the exercise of power, and the various circumstances and conflicts through which he has passed, have brought some taint upon what might hitherto be called (speaking comparatively and with reference to the moral tone of the times) the purity of his character.

I have represented him as permitting himself in some measure to lose sight of private virtues through the natural and frequent error of weighing them lightly in comparison with the superior importance to mankind of his public transactions.

In the second part also the contentions in which he has been engaged, and the insults which he receives from his aristocratic enemies, have raised in him through the operations of personal feelings the political passion of democracy.

On the point of temperament my design has been to represent the combination of energy with equanimity, a combination of which I have had an opportunity of observing a remarkable example in real life. The energy is chiefly intellectual; the composure in a great degree a matter of temperament. Thus, with a large fund of feeling and even of passion in his nature, his passion is not superficially excitable, nor liable to escape at any particular moment in sudden ebullitions or in ungovernable sallies.

He is at all times, though not strictly and completely, yet, having regard to the circumstances in which he finds himself, very adequately self-governed. His generosity, like his severity, is always well considered. His acts of vigour proceed in no respect from a restless or superfluous activity of disposition; they are called for by the occasion, and commensurate with it, and his administration of affairs is not more signalised by them than by a steady diligence and attention to business, the watchfulness and carefulness of a mind calmly and equably strong.

The *love* of such a man, though partaking of the fulness and largeness of his nature, was not to be inordinately passionate. Thus, whilst his heroines devote themselves to him with as ardent a sentiment

as I had it in my power to portray, he on the other hand 'smiles with superior love,' and may be imagined to have looked on the daughters of Eve in the spirit of that admonition which was conveyed to the lover of Eve herself, as

> Fair no doubt, and worthy well
> His cherishing, his honouring, and his love,
> Not his subjection.

Such is the general sketch which, when brought to a definition of what I meant, I would give of the character of Van Artevelde; yet there are probably divers traits here and there in the portraiture which may not seem to be exactly consistent with this outline, for I have not been solicitous of minute consistency in drawing my characters.

I am of opinion that one who writes under such a solicitude will necessarily lose for his representations the freedom of nature, and with it the truth to nature, consistency, or at least a high degree of it, not being in point of fact natural to man.

I am afraid that I have answered your inquiry at greater length than you intended. But you will excuse the particularity of a parental description. I had made some extracts from Froissart in support and elucidation of it, but on second thoughts I imagine that what I have written must be more than enough, and if you wished to look at the passages in Froissart which I rest upon, the readiest way would be to send you my marked copy of him.

Yours very sincerely,

Henry Taylor.

From James Stephen to Henry Taylor.

Downing Street: July 4, 1834.

My dear Taylor,—Elliot has just shown me your note, sounding the loud timbrel in echo to the sackbuts, dulcimers, and all kinds of music which your critics are ringing in your ears; I was pretty much ashamed of the jew's harp with which I struck into the concert—that is the truth of it. But I have long since come to the conclusion that a man who will not very often do what he is ashamed of will never do anything to be proud of. So I applied myself to tickle Northamptonshire ears, taking for my model that way of writing in which reviewers have taught the readers of reviews to find pleasure. I desire you to believe, not that I could emulate Mrs. Austin in her critical vein, but that I could do something better than the specimen exhibited in my friend the 'Mercury.' If I were not growing an old man, I should certainly betake myself to the formation of a style for the transfusion, in the most pleasing and effective way I could, of my thoughts into other men's heads. But what matters it in what phrases one addresses the right honourable this or my lord that? My present patchwork vehicle will continue to serve my purposes well enough, being, as you know, made up of the precision of a special pleader, embellished with antitheses, and a Johnsonian rumbling. I protest I think it almost

too good for the base uses to which all my mental progeny are destined.

I was not, I believe, quite sincere in controverting Lockhart's theory about the elements of which Van Artevelde is composed. But I spoke with perfect truth in saying that (observe that what I seem to write I always say, speaking to my amanuensis) the great merit of the character consists in its depths, and recesses, and dark places, and in its capability of suggesting various explanatory theories ; or, in other words, in the close relationship it bears to human nature, in a very peculiar and refined form indeed, but so refined as rather to have deepened than obliterated any of the great characteristics of man as he actually is. Now this is very high praise, which you fully deserve, and which, with a little more leisure and provocation, united to a good deal more reflection, I should infallibly inflict upon you in some work enjoying rather a hebdomadal than an ephemeral life. I think also that, without any breach of veracity, the structure of your language and the selection of the words which compose it—perhaps rather the rejection of those which do not—might be lauded to the skies. I like the dramatic action of part the second better than of part the first. It hangs together better, and has more of that quality of singleness, the subordination of the different parts to the general catastrophe, than I can discern in the first, where I still think there is some lack of clear development at the outset. However, I am not

meaning to treat you to a private criticism, but write only to say that I think you have succeeded in establishing a wide, an honest, and an enduring fame, and that I am glad of it, sincerely and heartily. Only remember that Burns was a good exciseman, and that Wordsworth is eminent as a stamp distributor ; and therefore do not let your poetship snort and grow saucy over the humdrums of correspondence with Smith of Barbadoes or Smyth of Guiana. Thus ends a gratulation ; one, I am sure, of a multitude, but I hope not from the warmest of your friends or admirers by many, because, on that supposition, you must be very rich in both.

I am, my dear Taylor, most truly yours,

JAMES STEPHEN.

From Henry Taylor to Southey.[1]

Downing Street : October 8, 1834.

My dear Mr. Southey,—I also am one who can best deal with my heart in solitude under any circumstances of distress. I have no manner of doubt that you will deal wisely with yours, and that your wisdom will be not unseasonably to constrain it. The last deep distress which I had to encounter was somewhat less than two years ago, when Hyde Villiers died ; and on the night of the day when the intelligence reached me I considered myself to be under the necessity of writing a despatch of great

[1] On the occasion of Southey's placing his wife in a lunatic asylum.

importance for the West Indian mail, and did write it accordingly. But I felt the effect to be such that I resolved never upon any future occasion to put a sorrow prematurely aside, if it were possible to avoid it with a clear conscience. Thank you for the extract. It will gratify Miss Fenwick to perceive that her certain sympathy with your feelings should have occurred to you. Her sympathy is indeed to be surely anticipated for the affectionate and the religious feelings of any human being, and her deepest sympathy for yours.

You have always lived much in the past and in the future—feeding your heart with retrospects and anticipations. You will now do so more and more. You will live more and more with 'the mighty minds of old,' with whom your lot has been cast, and you will live in thought and in hope with those who have been with you and have gone before you.[1]

Yours affectionately,

H. T.

[1] Southey writes to Henry Taylor (October 11, 1834):—'In the first stage of any great affliction, when exhaustion produces sleep, the waking is what we dread, because in sleep the affliction is forgotten. In the second stage it possesses us in our dreams, and then it is the going to sleep that is dreaded. Calm days will, however, ere long, in the natural course produce quiet nights. My days are calm, and the nervous feelings with which I awake soon pass away when I address myself to my occupation.'

From Henry Taylor to Southey.

Downing Street : January 23, 1835.

I met Lord Aberdeen at dinner the other day and took the opportunity of suggesting to him the institution of literary pensions for Ebenezer[1] and other such men, amongst whom I instanced Hogg, John Austin, and Carlyle. He said that my idea appeared to be to give pensions to obscure men, whereas he thought that it would be easier and better to give them to men of great eminence, in regard to whom there could be no dispute. He thought that the choice of others would be subject to a world of cavil and factious imputation of partiality. I explained my view to be that men should be chosen who had emerged by their own efforts, and made good their position with the class of readers to whom they addressed themselves, but who had not sought for notoriety through degrading their literary talents or applying them to popular and trading objects. He seemed to take an interest in the matter and to think it might be tried, and he entirely agreed that any impartial and well-grounded measure of the kind would be passed by acclamation in the House of Commons, where the mention a while ago of the pension to Dalton produced a universal cheer. He seemed to think that the nomination of the pensioners should not be in the Government, who would be always accused of jobbing ; but he saw the objections to

[1] Ebenezer Elliott.

vesting it in any body of men of letters or science, such bodies being notoriously beyond all others the most distracted by factions and disputes and party-spirit. I believe myself that it cannot be better placed than in the Government, which has most to lose by the loss of public esteem. I have lent him a copy of your letter to Lord Brougham. He said he had heard of it at the time, and should have great interest in reading it.

From Henry Taylor to his Mother.

London: January, 1835.

I went last night to the two old Miss Berrys, whom you may perhaps have heard of, if their fame has not been lost on the way to Willington. They are considered to have the most select clever society in London, Holland House alone excepted. They are between seventy and eighty years of age, and the eldest is exceedingly clever in a kind of French cleverness, after the manner of Madame du Deffant. She gave me a general invitation to come in an evening whenever I came that way and saw a light in the windows, and I was amused at the colour she gave to her unremitting dissipation: 'We are two old women, and you will always find us by our own fireside,' the meaning or the fact being that they have a party every night. She is a sharp, keen old woman, with a hard, handsome grey face, delicately tinted with rouge. The party consisted of twenty or thirty people, for

the most part middle-aged or old, with one or two bright spots of youth and beauty to give it relief, and such, I am told, is the nightly assemblage there from ten o'clock in the evening till two in the morning.

From Henry Taylor to Lady Hislop.

London: March 20, 1835.

This old philosopher [Wordsworth] is one of the most extraordinary human phenomena that one could have in the house. He has the simplicity and helplessness of a child in regard to the little transactions of life; and whilst he is being directed and dealt with in regard to them, he keeps tumbling out the highest and deepest thoughts that the mind of man can reach, in a stream of discourse which is so oddly broken by the little hitches and interruptions of common life that we admire and laugh at him by turns. Everything that comes into his mind comes out—weakness or strength, affections or vanities, so that, if ever an opportunity was afforded of seeing a human being through and through, we have it in the person of this 'old man eloquent.' He is very happy with us, and very social with everybody, and we have a variety of people to meet him every day at breakfast and dinner.

From Southey to Henry Taylor.

Keswick : June 6, 1835.

S. T. C.'s 'Table Talk' came to me yesterday. There is scarcely an opinion there upon any subject (not in the transcendental sphere) with which I do not agree ; without any communication we had travelled the same road. I have a very full account of Asgill ready for the fourth volume.[1] Coleridge knew only part of his history.

The portrait is the worst that I have seen of him. There was no week in which Coleridge's talk would not have furnished as much matter worthy of preservation as these two volumes contain. Henry Coleridge has kept marvellously clear of indiscretion in his perilous talk. But in what he says (p. lxix.) about his struggles against the habit of taking opium, every one who knew Coleridge from the time of his return from Malta till he took up his abode with the Gillmans could contradict him.

There are two streams of which Dante makes the purged spirit drink before it enters Paradise. Lethe is the one ; the other, which he calls Eunoë, was to bring back the remembrance of all that it is not better to forget. One who writes Coleridge's life (if he is fully acquainted with it) must often wish to drink of both. God bless you!

[1] Of *The Doctor*.

From Henry Taylor to Miss Fenwick.

Edinburgh : November, 1835.

I never felt more happy in Southey's society than during the twelve days that I spent at Keswick, notwithstanding the deplorable element in the circumstances. We had more to say to each other than usual—indeed, as much to say as could be said in the time ; and I was very glad of this, because I have felt from time to time, in my intercourse with Southey, a want of subjects of common interest. His conversation is so peculiarly impersonal, and my interests lie so much in personality, and my knowledge of books and interest in them is so much less again than even his in persons, that I have often felt the want of more communication with him than I could make out. But it has not been so this year. As I get older I am less confined in the range of my subjects.

And then I bade adieu to Keswick and came through all those pastoral solitudes between Langton and Selkirk, and through a less interesting country afterwards, to Edinburgh, not accompanied by Gilbert Elliot, who was prevented from joining me. And, as you anticipated, I have succeeded in getting people not to show me anything but themselves, and in the course of walking about the streets I have admired a fortress upon a hill, and in the course of conversation I shall probably pick up the names of the hill and fortress. And I have been upon another

hill, which I have already ascertained to be no other than Calton Hill, where I encountered certain matters of Grecian architecture, looking to my eyes much misplaced, and as if they must scorn the earth they stood upon; the hill presenting a sordid surface, neither wilderness nor shaven sward, nor rank grass, but half grassy, half dirty. And the men that I have seen are also those that you have anticipated—Wilson, Jeffrey, Pillans. The first I always have esteemed to be the most gifted of the many men who have put their talents into the pig-trough in these times; and his appearance squares with my estimate of him —a jovial, fair-haired ruffian, full of fire and talent, big and burly, and at the same time wild and animated. His forehead is one of the most lively and capacious-looking foreheads that I have seen, and he has the peculiarity of a flashing eye under a light-coloured and almost bald eyebrow.

Altogether he is a remarkable person to look at, and it occurred to me that I had never seen two men each striking in himself whose appearance bore so much of the same moral stamp as he and O'Connell. His talk I find answerable to his looks, and well worth listening to. He is very much by way of cultivating my acquaintance, and asked me to dine with them whenever I had nothing else to do. Pillans was of his party, and told me that he should not be happy unless I gave him a day, so I am to make him happy on Monday.

And yesterday I dined with my Lord Jeffrey.

He was neither agreeable nor otherwise, but ran on cleverly enough in a small way, affecting a light *poco-curante* tone, and succeeding so far as to exhibit levity without gaiety. One only wonders that he could ever have been considerable enough to be a curse to the literature of his times; and one only learns that the mischief which men may do bears no proportion to their means of doing anything else.[1]

From Henry Taylor to Southey.

London: November 5, 1835.

I returned to town on Wednesday after a fortnight at Edinburgh, three days at Alnwick, and three more at home.

My Edinburgh sojourn answered to me very well. I availed myself of your note, and thought Wilson by far the most striking man I met with in that place; indeed, I have seldom met with any person more striking in his way—a very excellent specimen of the Captain of a Free Company in Literature. I gave him your message, to the effect that you were still surrounded by women who persuaded you that

[1] In a letter to Southey of December 28, 1835, Henry Taylor writes:—'Wilson did try to get De Quincey to meet me; but I apprehend that he could hardly venture into the light of day owing to his debts. Wilson said he had come to see him for a day or two, and had staid nine months, during which time Wilson hardly had seen him. Now and then, as he went downstairs at seven in the morning, he met De Quincey coming up to bed with a candle in his hand. A "gentle, courteous creature," Wilson called him. I suppose he is one of those gentle creatures who don't care what they do to you behind your back.'

everything you did was perfect, and he answered that W—— lied, and that no such thing had been said by him, but that W—— had himself said something of the sort, as having heard it from some one else. He spoke of W——'s account of his mode of offering an introduction to you as calculated to misrepresent him, as if he had assumed a degree of familiarity in regard to you which was not consistent with the *reverence* which was becoming him in speaking of you. I laughed inwardly at the reverentiality of the Editor of 'Blackwood.' I dined with him twice, and supped with him once, and he was very entertaining—full of fire and talent.

The person of whom I saw most after Wilson was my Lord Jeffrey, and, though Hudson and the Mayor may have been the better men, yet the Lord Rector was worth seeing in order to understand by what small springs mankind may be moved from time to time. There came from him, with a sort of dribbling fluency, the very mincemeat of small talk, with just such a seasoning of cleverness as might serve to give it an air of pretension. Nevertheless, I believe the little man has his merits; I believe him to be good-natured, and, in his shallow way, kind-hearted. I have always considered that such things as he has done in literature are much more likely to be the result of vanity and ambition than of malice, and I dare say that he thought it a fine thing to be a clever man of the world, and care for nothing but making effect. But when one looks at the clever little

worldling, and remembers that for twenty years he was enabled to 'keep the sunshine from the cottage door' of a man of genius, one cannot but wonder how so small a man could cast so large a shadow. I liked his wife, who seemed to be a good-natured, unaffected, and intelligent woman.

From Henry Taylor to Lady Hislop.

Downing Street: February 16, 1836.

My visits in the country in my holidays are almost too long past to be mentioned. I was at home for three weeks, and the household there presented as few tokens of the lapse of time (two years since I had been there) as could possibly be expected in that aged family. The lady of eighty-eight (my mother's mother) was more deaf than she had been, and showed symptoms of an exhausted mind; a female servant of eighty-seven had been stricken with palsy; a man of eighty-four had retired to an almshouse; my mother herself had an occasional look of old age, which I had not seen so distinctly before, but in alacrity of mind she was herself; my father was in all respects unchanged, except indeed that he had been guilty of some acts of juvenile indiscretion which made my mother think it necessary that he should receive a serious admonition from me. He had allowed a sort of literary swindler, of whom he knew nothing, to borrow four or five hundred pounds of him, which done, the said swindler decamped and

wrote him a letter telling him that he had 'committed what Talleyrand would call a blunder.' I admonished him accordingly, and told him that, whenever he should come to my maturity of understanding, he would think it very foolish to lend money to people he did not know.

From Willington I went to Keswick, where I lived at the inn and had the mornings to myself, and employed them industriously, and the evenings (being the part of the day when poor Mrs. Southey was quiet and secluded) I passed with Southey and his two daughters, seeing that strongest and noblest and tenderest of human beings in the light in which everything that is best in human nature is best seen. And to me it is a great advantage to see what is good assume such an attractive shape as it does in Southey, because I am afraid I have no keen sense of admiration for virtue as virtue, and when it is presented to me in the shape of some excellent old lady who is as good as she can be and nothing else, I care very little about it. In Southey I can admire it very much, and it assumes a very pretty aspect in one of his daughters too, and not an unpleasing one in the other. So I passed a fortnight very pleasantly in admiring virtue.

And from Keswick I went to Edinburgh, and there I spent most of my mornings in reading and writing and wandering about the hills, and most of my evenings in solitude at my inn. I went to three or four dinners, and saw a sufficient number of

Judges and Professors, great and small, the latter of the two weeks that I was there, and chiefly Professor Wilson (of the great) and Lord Jeffrey (of the small). The latter you know. The former looks like one of Robin Hood's company; or he might have been Robin himself—jovial, but fierce—as if he would be the first at a feast but by no means the last in a fray; full of fire and animal energy, and of wit and sarcasm, and hardly seeming to heed anybody about him—a man who has always been the king of his company. Moral philosophy was never taught by a wilder or more fiery Professor, and he was certainly by far the most considerable man I met with at Edinburgh.

I divided the small remainder of my holidays between a visit to some far-away cousins of mine in Northumberland and a second return home. I was greatly pleased with my cousins, whom I had hardly seen for a quarter of a century, or at least for twenty years. They were the only girls that had come near me in those days, and their visits to my father's house for a few weeks in a summer used to bring the only gleams that fell across the grey morning of my life; and there was much matter of recollection, therefore, to make them interesting to me, and, seeing them now as women of forty years of age—the leaf yellowing—I was glad to find that the taste of my boyhood had been (for once) such as would stand the rebukes of time and change. So I went home better pleased with myself than when I had left Edinburgh.

From Henry Taylor to Miss Fenwick.

London : May 24, 1836.

I have given two breakfasts to Wordsworth, at one of which he was as brilliant as I have ever seen him, having the advantage of Charles Austin to elicit him. A more animated and vigorous conversation than they made of it between them I have never listened to. Edward Villiers, Spedding, Ferguson, and Carlyle were the others of the party, and made a good audience, but even Carlyle was little else than an auditor.

The other breakfast was not so successful, for Charles Austin was not there, and, no one else being bold enough to address themselves directly to Wordsworth across the table, I could not get the conversation generalised, and he gave himself to his neighbour. Moreover, I committed the mistake of asking Rogers, which made two suns in one system, Edward Villiers said, or, as Lister amended it, a sun and a moon, which was as bad, for Rogers's position does not admit of people treating him as a listener, and, as he cannot keep pace with Wordsworth, he must necessarily break a party into two conversations.

June 11.

Wordsworth has determined upon going to Italy on the 8th or 10th of July, and stays here in the meanwhile. He told me the other day that the whole of the contents of his last volume had been written

in the last five or six years. I adverted specially to the sonnet, 'Why art thou silent,' as having been generally supposed to have been written in youth, but he said that it had been written two or three years ago, and was merely 'an act of the intellect.'

From Henry Taylor to Southey.

Downing Street: August 23, 1836.

I have begun my vacation, and mean to spend it here. This is the place, and in this place this is the time for literary leisure; and without a spell of such leisure I could not set Thomas à Becket upon his legs. Once set a-going, he will find his way to his tragical catastrophe as sure as he was born—that is, unless *I* come to a tragical end prematurely. But plotting is the great difficulty with me, and I should like to set up a partnership, and be the Fletcher to some Beaumont who would take that part of the business off my hands.

Withdrawing from business and society (as I am doing now) always makes a great change in my frame of mind, and the sense of that change leads me to many meditations as to what might have been, or would be now, the effect upon me of a life led continuously in leisure and comparative solitude. Upon the whole, I am disposed to think that such a life would be one of too much excitement, and that the wear and tear from within would have been more trying to my spirits than that of the external warfare.

Spedding left us on Saturday on his way home, carrying with him the goodwill, I believe, of everybody here, and the admiration of those who are able to appreciate him. Stephen told me this morning that he had never met with any one who seemed to him to have it in him to cut so conspicuous a figure in the world, if the will were added to the powers. With his largeness of capacity, justness of judgment, his character and his pecuniary independence, there is no reason why he should not find himself a Cabinet Minister ten years hence, and there is every reason why those who wish well to the country should desire to see him one. But easiness of nature and defect of ambition may very likely keep him where he is.

From Henry Taylor to Miss Fenwick.

August 27, 1836.

I have got but a very little way in my plotting. I never do anything which is so difficult to me as this ; there are so many objects to be kept in view. One has to think out each of those objects elaborately by itself, and then to conceive an abstract of them in such a wholeness as may represent their proportions and subordinations, and prevent the sacrifice of the greater to the less, which is not easy. I think, however, that a plot is growing upon me gradually, and that I shall find myself in possession of one before my holidays expire. By way of getting myself out of the region of realities I read (for the third

time, I believe) 'The Collegians,' the best of all tragic stories, in my mind, except 'The Bride of Lammermoor.' I am now reading Beaumont and Fletcher, who are fruitful in plots, and also in poetry and talent. I read and write till two o'clock, then I go to the office and look over the letters of the day, giving some aid to their despatch when necessary; then I walk in Kensington Gardens, where I sometimes find some children to play with me; then I come home, and dine, sleep, read, and close the evening with a walk round Regent's Park, which, with its wood, water, and architecture, affords (I always think) the most beautiful civic scenery in the world. Having seen Venice, I suppose I may talk as if I knew what the world contains in that kind, and the Regent's Park is more beautiful in my eyes than Venice. As I walked last night along some of the terraces where one sees the columnar architecture through and over intervening shrubberies, and surmounted by statues on the front of the eaves, I could not help thinking that these were dwelling-places too beautiful for mankind in general, and that they seemed to be rather fitted for some peculiar race. And here and there appeared a drawing-room with windows open, through which one saw a richly-coloured and highly-ornamented interior, with a lamp of a graceful shape on a table, and a girl, whom one felt it necessary to think graceful also, seated beside it. But then from time to time I passed a house the tenants of which were not unknown to me, and I

called to mind that they were people whose appearance would not bear a comparison, even by that moonlight, with the column or the sculptured pediment of their house, or with the trees through whose tracery of foliage I was looking. And that suggested the rather melancholy reflection that man is apt to bring more beauty and grace about him than he can afford to be affronted with, and thus to become the eyesore of the scene which he has himself created. Perhaps it may be a lurking sense of this truth which gives its peculiar charm to a ruin.

By way of a variety I dined yesterday, *tête-à-tête*, with old Rogers, and he was very agreeable. I dare say there is no man living who has seen so much of so many eminent men as he has, touching as he does all circles, philosophic, literary, political, naval and military, and artistical. I suppose there is hardly any hero or man of genius of our times, from Nelson and Crabbe downwards, who has not dined at Rogers's table; and he can tell something worth hearing of them all, and can tell it in the most agreeable manner.

From Henry Taylor to the Earl of Aberdeen.[1]

London: September 22, 1836.

Dear Lord Aberdeen,—There is much weight, no doubt, in the objections mentioned by Sir Robert

[1] In reply to a letter suggesting as the subject of a tragedy the conquest of Naples by Charles of Anjou.

Peel, especially as the picture turns out not to be in London. And indeed, as a friend of Southey, one would not wish a portrait of him by Sir Thomas Lawrence to run any risk. There remain two to choose of—one by Opie, the other by Lane. They are not, I think, very good; but they are certainly superior to any others that I have seen.

I thank you much for the trouble you have taken in this matter, and more still for that which you have bestowed upon my dramatic interests. I resolved to spend my vacation in these London solitudes on purpose that I might devote it to such research and consideration as might enable me to fix upon a subject for a play; and I did not forget that of the conquest of Naples by Charles of Anjou. I read Sismondi's account of it in both his histories; but my imagination was not captivated with it, as yours has been. You, I dare say, have read it somewhere in greater detail, and, were I to do so, I might get more lively impressions of it than any summary history can give me; for I can never warm to such histories. Sismondi's account, however, is enough to show that there exists in the subject all the variety of costume and sentiment and of historical interest which you point out; and still I doubt whether it is a subject that would suit me. I do not think that I am competent to the highly romantic colouring and the rapid action which Italian and Eastern characters seem to require. I feel more firm upon my legs on plain ground, and I believe that I ought to seek for a

sort of bald strength in character and incident rather than aim at brilliancy.

For the last six weeks I have been diligently revolving three other subjects as well as this of the conquest of Naples: Edwy and Elgiva, Sixtus V., and Thomas à Becket. It would be necessary to deal with the subject of Edwy and Elgiva as one of abstract human passions; for we seem to be too much cut off from the Saxon manners and frame of mind to individualise characters of those times with success. This consideration has turned me from Edwy and Elgiva. Sixtus V. would be an admirable subject (especially for an acting drama) up to the period of his acquisition of the Papacy; but one could hardly stop there, and then there would be a want of a catastrophe. Thomas à Becket presents some not inconsiderable difficulties, but upon the whole I believe I shall give him the preference.

His character is strong and simple, and apt, therefore, for dramatic representation. That the world is familiar with his story I hardly consider to be an objection; for readers are almost as ready to take an interest in what is previously known to them, as in what is new—witness the interest which is so often taken in a second reading of a novel. There was, I think, more mental cultivation in that age than in any which followed, down to the reign of Henry VIII. Some of the letters of the time (of which large collections are extant) would have been worthy of the days of Elizabeth. There is the advantage of a modern

history of the reign upon a large scale exceedingly well written, and there are ample contemporaneous materials.

Amongst the inconveniences there is that of the principal characters hardly ever meeting, or even coming near enough to each other to have their abode in the same territory. Thus, Becket's appearance in person could be only in a few scenes here and there, and the main stream of the action must consist of some story to be interwoven with his. Then comes the ever-recurring difficulty of bringing women into connection with historical events. There were, however, in the Court of Henry II. two young ladies who were mixed up in some degree with the transactions of the times—the French Princess Adelais, who was brought up there from her childhood in the intention that she should be married in due time to Henry's son Richard, and a daughter of Eudo, Count of Pontieure, who was in Henry's hands as a hostage. Henry was charged with having seduced both ; but the charge seems to have been well-founded only in the case of Adelais, whom no remonstrances could induce him either to marry to his son or to restore to her own family. I could not make anything of the frail lady, except in some subordinate and incidental way perhaps ; but I think the daughter of Count Eudo might do for a heroine, and it would not be difficult to connect her fate with that of Becket. Suppose, for instance, that the false charge against her and Henry should lead her to being included in Becket's

letters of commination, or even in the actual excommunication which he fulminated against many of Henry's adherents ; then suppose her to have a lover to take her part, in the person of a gentleman of Henry's Court, and let him be accordingly the instigating and leading one of the four gentlemen of the Court who conspired against Becket.

This is all the glimpse of a plot which I have got hitherto, and before I go further it will be necessary to fix the principal characters (besides Henry's and Becket's) out of which the action is to proceed ; and in this I must be governed by the range of my experiences of human nature, as well as by other considerations ; for I should always wish my *dramatis personæ* to be such as I can find some sort of basis for amongst characters known to me in life. For those of the *dramatis personæ* to whom I am not obliged to assign any very unusual line of conduct, I could easily find living archetypes ; but I have sought the circle of my acquaintance in vain for such a nature as, being transferred into the reign of Henry II., and being subjected to the influences and sentiments of that age, would have been prompted to murder an archbishop for the love of a lady. I am afraid I am not fortunate enough to number amongst my friends any person whose character exhibits that particular combination of the amiable and the energetic. History, however, does not make it absolutely necessary to suppose that the conspirators, each and all of them, intended the assassination from the first.

One supposition is that they meant to bring Becket by force before Henry. Another, that they meant to compel him to revoke his anathemas. The murder may be supposed to be the act of only one or two of them, provoked to it, at the moment, by Becket's resistance.

Pray believe that I did not mean to be so long when I began, and that I am

Ever, dear Lord Aberdeen,

Yours very sincerely,

H. Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to Miss Fenwick.

May 6, 1837.

Carlyle has got through two of his lectures. He was nervous in the extreme, insomuch that he told me nothing but the determination not to be beaten could have brought him through the first. Nervous difficulties take much, of course, from the effect which they might otherwise have; but I doubt whether under any circumstances he would have much charm for a fashionable London auditory. He wants all the arts and dexterities which might propitiate them, and he has been hitherto so much abroad in his measurements, that two lectures out of the six have hardly brought him to the borders of his subject. But, though I fear he has no chance for much success, I think his *naïveté* and the occasional outbreaks of his genius and spirit will save him from being

considered as a signal failure. His nervousness makes me dreadfully nervous in listening to him, so that I find it the greatest relief when he is done. The best part of the business is that he will clear not less than 150*l.*, I believe, and possibly as much as 200*l.*

From Henry Taylor to his Mother.

Downing Street: September 16, 1837.

I have just come from my visit in Hampshire, and, as I have nothing else to tell you, I must give you some account of that. A visit to a great country house was a novelty to me, and I was the better for the change and the amusement of it, though rather the worse for the fatigue of the first day, which was by accident made more than it needed to have been. I went by the coach, of course, and I had declined their proposal to send a carriage for me to the Lodge, because I thought a walk through the park would be a better thing than a drive after my journey on the coach. So, when I was set down at *a Lodge*, I made no enquiries, but left my portmanteau with the gatekeeper and walked on to the house. When I came in front of it, I passed two ladies who had just come out and who were strangers to me. I thought that one of them was probably Lady Ashburton (for I had never seen her or Lord Ashburton either, their eldest son Bingham and daughter-in-law Lady Harriet Baring being my friends and not the old

couple) ; but of course I passed on to the house in hopes of finding those with whom I *was* acquainted to introduce me to those with whom I was not ; but the servant told me that neither Bingham Baring nor Lady Harriet were staying there, and then I found out that I had been set down at the wrong Lodge, and that the house I had got into was Sir Thomas Baring's instead of Lord Ashburton's, which was three miles off. Hereupon I got the servant to go and look after a man to carry my portmanteau, and whilst he was gone and I was lounging about the hall, and looking at the pictures on the staircase, the two ladies returned and found me there, to their great alarm apparently. I told my story as well as I could to the one whom I found to be Lady Baring, but her head was evidently full of Bow Street reports and persons 'fashionably attired' who got admittance into people's houses on various pretexts, and she escaped from me with all convenient speed. The servant, however, did his bidding, and I was at last enabled to find my way to the genuine Lord Ashburton's, where I arrived, excessively heated and somewhat showered upon, just as they were finishing their dinner. Lady Ashburton said that I would only have to dine with an audience like the King of France, but I told her it required the position of a King of France to enable a man to go through his dinner under such circumstances ; and in point of fact I hardly made a pretext of dining ; and then I had nothing for it but to keep up my heat and excite-

ment, and make myself as agreeable as I could for the evening; and the consequence of the whole was that, when I went to bed, I had a fit of nervous tremor and a restless night, and was knocked up for the next day; and the day after I caught cold, and, in short, I had one ailment or another all the time of my visit. But, notwithstanding all this, I found a good deal that was pleasant in it. I thought the party all made themselves very agreeable (myself included), and there were shaded rides through the domain for miles in length and a house full of fine paintings and in itself a splendid work of art (it is said to be Inigo Jones's *chef-d'œuvre*), and a magnificent park with all proper accompaniments of gardens and ornamented grounds, which one came upon in the woods and by the water. Moreover, there was a child of six years old in the house, and two dogs. The rest of the party consisted only of Lord and Lady Ashburton and an unmarried daughter; Bingham and Lady H. Baring; and a couple of Mildmays, the father and mother of the child. Lord Ashburton would have been worth seeing had it been only to see what manner of man could make more millions of money by commerce than were ever made before, and it is very singular (as I recollect hearing Lord Lansdowne remark) that the man who could do this is a man of a curious subtlety of understanding, seeing things on so many sides, and so equally impressed with every aspect of them, that it seems a mere matter of chance which of his views he will

act upon at last—just the sort of mind which one would think the least adapted for successful enterprise in commerce. He was notorious in the House of Commons for making very able speeches which convinced everybody but himself, for he generally ended by voting in the teeth of his own speech. Knowing this of him by reputation, I was much entertained to see how completely his conversation tallied with it. His opinions were always expressed with clearness and cleverness, but, though he did not explicitly say so, one saw that he entertained them as merely provisional or probationary as it were—tenants at will; and, when any one expressed an opposite opinion, he gave his assent just the same as if it had squared with his own views, though one saw also that the assent was equally provisional. For the rest, he seemed to be an accomplished and cultivated man—his countenance ugly and mournful, with a wild and nervous brightness of the eye; his manner simple and quiet, but sometimes rather odd and abstracted; and the man upon the whole conveying an impression of kindness and benevolence through his gloom. Lady Ashburton is a rather handsome and considerable looking old lady, clever and lively, and with a good deal of conversational talent; there was a high tone of enjoyment and prosperity about her, especially as she must be some seventy years of age; but one thing she said was strikingly contrasted with that tone. The evening before I left them, when I had got rather intimate

amongst them, they were talking of some present which had been sent to her, and I said, 'Lady Ashburton, I think you are the last person that one would give anything to.' She seemed a little startled and asked why, and I said, 'Because you *have* everything.' To which she replied, 'Have I a friend?'

From Miss Fenwick to Henry Taylor.

Rydal Mount: June 29, 1838.

It is no new thing to me to wish you to be with me, but I think I never wished it so much as I have done since I have been here, both from the exceeding beauty of all that meets the eye and the purity of the air, but most of all for the sake of the society of this great man, which you could appreciate better than I can, though you might hardly have enjoyed it more. But at present I am not sufficient for these things, though they are not lost upon me *altogether*. From time to time I have heard portions of that marvellous work of his which is to appear when he ceases to be, and I am to hear it all.[1] It was once read to one competent to express the feelings it is calculated to give rise to, and they are not overstated by Coleridge in those lines he wrote after hearing it read or rather recited by the author. After hearing it, I think I must have felt as the Queen of Sheba felt after hearing all the wisdom of Solomon—'there was no

[1] *The Prelude.*

more spirit in her ;' and so it was with me. I wish you could hear it as I did ; though you, I trust, may live to read it, it is something more to hear him recite it, or, as his little grandson says, 'Grandpapa reading without a book.'

I must endeavour to note down the particulars that strike me most in his domestic life, his deportment to his servants, and, what tells as much, their deportment to him, which is more easy and familiar than ever I saw servants before, and yet duly mingled with a respectful kind of admiration which shows that they both know him to be a hero as well as feel him to be 'their fellow-man.' One of them, the other day, on being requested by a party to show them Mr. Wordsworth's study (for various parties come here just to see the poet's home), showed them the parlour where the books are, saying, 'This is his *library*, but his *study* is out of doors.' They all seem to derive some cultivation from him.

This afternoon I go to Greta Hall. How I wish I could have written a worthy letter from this place; I could say so much of Dr. Arnold and family, Hartley Coleridge, &c.! Will the many thoughts and feelings that have been passing through my mind all be faded away before I see you again? If I did not believe that thoughts and feelings are (if they are worth anything) more permanent in our being than they often appear to be, I should say such opportunities for cultivation are sadly thrown away upon me now. But I must say good-bye.

Greta Hall: July 1.

And now I am here, dear cousin, and most happy to be so. I came yesterday evening, and found Mr. Southey looking far better than he did when he was in town, and apparently in very good spirits; the girls too were gay, so we had a very cheerful evening. I never saw so much in the same space of time of his inimitable humour. To see him in his own house and with his family is seeing him to know him and to love him; in other society one is apt to think this is that good and extraordinary man that writes so many beautiful and excellent works; but here the author is completely merged in the man, and it is an effort to the mind to think that he ever writes at all. There could not be a greater change in regard to society than to come here from Rydal Mount—as great a change as from good to bad; and yet how excellent is each, and how delightful it is to think that goodness has *so wide a range*! It cannot but enlarge one's mind to have felt this so forcibly.

From Henry Taylor to his Mother.

London: July 2, 1838.

The festivities have done me no harm, thank you. I wish you were able to bear the prancings of your little poodle of a village as well as I am to bear those of this Metropolitan Monster. I sat at home writing a scene of my play whilst the Queen was

enacting hers at Westminster Abbey,[1] and in the afternoon I strolled down to Waterloo Place about the hour of her return in hopes of hearing a great mob give a great shout, which I should like to have heard. But the mob stared and gaped in all sobriety of spirit, and made no more noise than so many philosophers. In the evening I went to a friend's in Connaught Place to see the Hyde Park fireworks from his window, and one variety of them I thought very beautiful; and there was a beautiful effect produced by the occasional gleams of light on the immense multitude gathered in the Park. A lady observed that it was like some of the effects in Martin's pictures. The state of the streets was indescribable. I had some difficulty in getting across Oxford Street on foot. The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland and his lady came in a carriage, and had to get out and walk (she covered with diamonds), till the mob, who seemed disposed to be kind, lifted their carriage out of the mess for them. Yet at half-past one they left us, not to get home as well as they could, but to rush into the greatest confusion of all and find their way to the ball at the Duke of Wellington's. Buonaparte used to say that one o'clock in the morning courage was the only courage that was rare, and people seemed to have it in perfection on this occasion.

[1] The Queen's Coronation.

From Henry Taylor to Southey.

Downing Street: July 5, 1838.

I should like to have been present when Soult and the Duke of Wellington first met. Before Soult came here they had not seen each other face to face, though Soult had once seen the Duke asleep on the road somewhere, and the Duke had seen Soult through a telescope on the morning of the day at Pampeluna. The sight he had of him there was of importance, as the Duke tells the story. There was a certain agreeable scapegrace hanging about the armies, who used to be allowed to frequent both camps, and would dine one day with Soult and another with the Duke. He was with the Duke on that morning, and asked him if he had ever seen Soult, and, the Duke replying in the negative, he said, 'Allow me to direct your telescope and you shall see him now.' The Duke saw him, and at that moment he was sending off an aide-de-camp at full gallop, waving to him with his hat in a particular direction. The Duke said to himself, 'He's quite right, that is my weak point,' and immediately despatched some troops to strengthen it. The Duke, in relating this to Rogers, who told it me, observed that such things showed the use of a telescope in the field, which was not so much used as it should be.

When the Duke received Soult at the ball at Apsley House, they embraced according to foreign

custom, which the Duke follows with foreigners ; and the Duke said, ' Whatever others may say, it gives me great pleasure to see you in my own house.'

From Henry Taylor to Miss Fenwick.

Downing Street : August 3, 1833.

I have been meeting the Duke of Wellington several times lately in society, which has been interesting to me ; first at Lady Shelley's Saturday morning music parties, which, however, were too numerous for me to feel myself in his society, and afterwards at two very small evening parties at Rogers's, only about fifteen persons. He is much oldened these last six months, having been very ill in the winter ; and he has no longer the same vivacity of look that he had, nor the same appearance of vigour. He talked very little, and was almost entirely occupied with the singing of his pet, Miss Jervis. But it was perhaps more interesting to see him with her, and her ways with him, than it would have been to hear him talk. I believe you have heard me speak of her. To all appearance she is a gay, wild, audacious girl, who cares for nobody and gives full scope to that unmodified naturalness of manner which in society amounts to a very considerable degree of eccentricity. This makes some people say that she is half-mad, and others that she is as bold as a lion. But Miss Montague, who has seen a good deal of her, tells me that she finds her very rational, and Rogers

assures me that she is in reality extremely timid. I cannot say how the case may be; but I can easily see what a charm there must be to the Duke of Wellington in a person who can be as free and playful as a child in her ways with him. One sees that the respect which is felt for him must be apt to take away all elasticity from his social atmosphere; people are shy of approaching him, and there is a want of ease and familiarity and freedom in the tone of conversation, except perhaps with some of his very intimate friends. But Miss Jervis runs up, looks brightly in his old face, and laughs and chatters and coaxes him. When she sat down to sing, I thought there could not be a more formidable thing for a girl of three or four and twenty to undertake—a small room and a small audience, and a dead silence; the Duke planted before the piano; Sir Robert Peel, Lord Aberdeen, and others, the gravest of men and statesmen, stopped short in their conversations; and old Rogers, well known to be at all times in agonies of anxiety as to everything *going off* well in his house. One might have been in a little agony oneself *for her*, if her face did not put one at ease. But she began without a shade of anxiety for herself, sang the first verse of her song, and then looked brightly over to the Duke and said, 'Do you like that?' and afterwards, when some one made her sing a song which she did not like herself, she seemed to have no difficulty in doing it, only saying, 'Now, Duke, you had better talk whilst I'm singing this.'

From Miss Fenwick to Henry Taylor.

Rydal : August 18, 1838.

I have had so much to interest me the last two months that I have taken little heed of the weather, though I suppose a longer continuance of the cold and rain would have forced itself on my attention, ' and through the body's sickness reach the mind.' Some interruption there has been to my enjoyment the last ten days from an attack of illness this dear great man here has had, almost, I believe, the only one he has ever had. It came on suddenly, something like your father's attacks of sciatica ; but it appeared to me to be attended with more general indisposition, and it did not for some days seem inclined to go off so kindly. Perhaps, from being so unused to indisposition, he did not know so well how to deal with it ; indeed, he was very droll about it, and treated it with great ceremony from its being a stranger ; so that, in the midst of one's concern and anxiety about him, it was impossible not to get a little amusement at the same time. You may easily imagine how copiously he would talk on the subject, and how minute he would be in his description of its rise and fall, &c., from the exact moment when he was coming downstairs ' as free from pain as an angel,' and was seized with an agony which revealed to him his capacity for physical suffering ; and no doubt to such a nature as his, so intense and imaginative, pain of any kind is more keenly felt, and suggests more

to the mind than it does to more sluggish natures; though at the same time there may be a greater ability to master it. His pain has, however, happily left him, though not without leaving a train of fancies of the hypochondriacal kind behind it. These, I trust, will soon take their leave also, and he be able to resume his ordinary habits and enjoy all the beauty that is around him, which no one, I believe, ever loved as much as he does. Every day that I am with him I am more and more struck with the *truth* of his writings; they are from the abundance of his heart; yet (as he said last night) how small a portion of what he has felt or thought has he been able to reveal to the world; and he will leave it, his tale still untold. His illness has been an interruption to his continuing to read to me his unpublished poetry; indeed, without this illness, he is so beset with visitors at this season that he has very little leisure time. Some days there are in the course of the day between twenty and thirty people at the Mount, which made him determine never to see any one before two o'clock; but there seems always some reason for breaking through this resolution, so that, what with his illness and obligingness, his precious time is sadly cut up. I never go there till teatime, for I could not stand that dissipation; but I am very glad when he finds his way here alone, and makes my abode a kind of refuge. And now that he is well again, I may hear 'how his heart was nursed in genuine freedom,' and 'how his immortal spirit was

built up.' How much have I to say to you about this great man, my dear cousin! Perhaps no one has ever seen him in greater intimacy, and I can truly say my admiration has kept pace with my knowledge of him, and my reverence even with this near view of his infirmities. I have just been reading his pamphlet on the 'Convention of Cintra,' which has enlarged my idea of his nature. What a fervent work it is! I wish you could get it to read. Whatever any one thought of him before reading it, they must think more of him after. I am going to read his sister's journal of her tour with him, and I have read Mrs. Wordsworth's of their tour in France, Switzerland, and the North of Italy in the year 1820—a very interesting, unpretending journal. The little William Wordsworth who is here, the three years' darling, is the most engaging child I have ever seen, and one of extraordinary promise, if one can form a judgment at that age.

The beloved old poet has again begun to read me his MS., so in time I hope to hear it all. You will read it in time, my dear cousin, but I fear you may never *hear* that 'song divine of high and passionate thoughts, to their own music chanted,' as I have heard it. It was almost too much emotion for me to see and hear this fervent old man, the passionate feelings of his youth all come back to him, making audible this 'linked lay of truth,' and forgetting for a while in these varied impressions of the past all that these struggles and passionate feelings

have worked out for him, and returning with gratitude and deep humility to a sense of present peace and an assurance of future glory. *That* never flagged in him. He recognised his own greatness in the midst of the neglect, contempt, and ridicule of his fellow-creatures, which strikes one as what is most extraordinary in his character, when one keeps in view his ardent sympathies with them, and how alive he is in all his affections. I recollect hearing Mr. Rogers say that people got insensible to praise, but never to censure; it is quite the reverse with him; he likes praise, though he did so well without it, and he cares little for censure, though he had some emotion of indignation when some one told him De Quincey had said of him that he was not *courteous to women*, the falsest thing that could be said.

Did you happen to read in 'Tait's Magazine' those articles that relate to Wordsworth?[1] He forbade their entrance into his own house; they found their way, however, to Ambleside, and I looked over them. They are beautifully written, and not untruthfully; it is at worst but seeing the truth with a jaundiced eye. His description of Mrs. Wordsworth I thought both true and beautiful; since Adam no man ever has been more fitly mated, and he certainly more happily, for his Eve has guided him into the paths of peace and to the tree of life. I am much inclined to think that more notices of him will be published in his lifetime than after his death. After the publication of

[1] De Quincey's articles.

his own autobiographical poem it will appear like sacrilege to touch upon his life ; they will ' leave him alone with his glory.' He has been working hard this last month at this poem, that he may leave it in a state fit for publication so far as it is written—that is, fifteen books. May God grant him life to write many more ! He seems still to have a great power of working ; he can apply himself five, six, or seven hours a day to composition, and yet be able to converse all the evening.

I have spent a very pleasant summer. The society of the poet and his family, and other society I have seen at the Mount, has been a constant source of interest and pleasure to me. Very often I have longed for you to be here ; if you could but dwell for a time among these scenes and in such society, they would grow upon you more and more, and your taste and judgment would both be satisfied and enlarged. Among the various people I have seen at the Mount lately, I have seen no one who has interested me more than Sir William Hamilton,[1] who, Mr. Wordsworth says, resembles Coleridge more in his intellectual character than any one else he has ever known. It was delightful as well as amusing to see the two great men together. The dear old poet was not well, which perhaps gave the younger one more opportunity for displaying himself. Yet there was no thought of display either ; he spoke from the

[1] Sir William Rowan Hamilton, the mathematician, many of whose poems will be found in his ' Life ' by the Rev. R. P. Graves.

abundance of his heart, the thoughts of which seem prone to form themselves into sonnets, many of which he repeated, always prefacing them with some account of the occasions on which they were composed, and saying, 'Would you like me to repeat the sonnet that then came into my head?' Of his talent, or knowledge, or wisdom, or goodness one could of course form no idea in so slight an acquaintance, but he certainly has that *childlikeness* which accompanies the highly gifted, when those gifts have been used for high purposes. He was on his way to Newcastle, and is to be here again on his way back.

From the Hon. Mrs. Norton to Henry Taylor.[1]

October, 1838.

Mention to the author of 'Jurisprudence' the following: I was walking by Black Gang Chine, and saw a Preventive Service man, very handsome, with a fierce, cruel eye, very like Lord Conyngham, only wilder. Says I, 'Are you the guide here?' 'No,' says he, looking at his oilskin trousers, as a

[1] In an undated fragment of a letter (to what correspondent I know not) Henry Taylor writes:—'On Saturday I dined and went to the play with Mrs. Norton, which *sounds* gay, but which *is* as saddening a way of passing an evening as I could find. Her society is saddening to me in itself, so glorious a creature to look at even as she is—so transcendent formerly, and now so faded in beauty, so foundered in life. She went to see a play called "Victorine" (which I think you have seen), in order to see what would be the effect upon her of seeing now what she had seen eighteen years ago, and never since! The effect was, what probably she expected, to make her cry—not, I think, at anything in the play, but at the collocation of the past with the present.'

Lifeguardsman might at his uniform, condemning my stupidity. 'Ho,' says I. That was our beginning. He then told me his history. How he had been a smuggler *once*; how a 'most respectable young woman' wished to marry him; how her parents objected; how he swore to reform; and, finally, how he went to his smuggling companions and demanded his share (one-third value) of the boat. They refused, and very naturally d—d him for forsaking them; he pressed the point, offered to allow any valuers they appointed to decide his share and not murmur; they laughed in his face. He became exasperated, and went one night and sawed off a third of the boat. This did him no good, but the expense of repairing her would cost more than if they had dealt fairly by him. To my comments on this action he replied, 'Yes, marm, but you see *they* darn't nor *I* darn't complain at law, 'cause it was a smuggling craft, and *that's how it would always be* if there was no law; a man would try and right himself, and, if he couldn't, he'd revenge himself.' I looked a little anxiously round me after this agreeable conversation and begged him to drink my health, with a slight doubt as to whether my purse would go home with me or with him; but he was so good as to let me keep it, and, proud of his present virtuous life, informed me he now and then caught an old companion, and sent him to jail, receiving his Preventive reward. I mused much on the philosophy of virtue and went home.

Such a lovely place my temporary home has been at Niton, at the back of the island; such sunny green hills and copses sloping to the broad blue sea, and nothing to remind you it wasn't Paradise except the quantity of earwigs, which dwell in verandahed cottages; and the fact of the post office being still so young and frisky that it sowed its wild oats by the most irregular delivery of letters. There! I find it has not refreshed me writing, but, on the contrary, my ankle aches, though I have not written with my foot. I mean to return to the city of the Plague in ten days or less. Accept the assurances of my continued displeasure about the spit-spat story, and believe me,

Yours truly,

N.

From Henry Taylor to H—— T——.[1]

Colonial Office, London: October 18, 1838.

My dear Sir,—I have been much interested in your letter, and very glad to receive it, and though I wish very much that you could give a better account of Oxford, and of your relations with people there, yet I am glad that you have spoken just as you feel about it; for there would be no use at all in communication if it were not perfectly open and unreserved.

I dare say that there is a great deal to be complained of at Oxford on the points you mention. I do

[1] An Oxford student.

not doubt that men with certain adventitious advantages are courted, and that others are unnoticed. Perhaps it is not offering you much of a consolation to say that so it is to a great degree all the world over. The way to meet such a state of things at Oxford, and elsewhere, is by cultivating that true independence of spirit which is inseparable from real humility, not by defying or despising, nor even (though there may be no harm in that) by laughing at the ways of the world, but by cherishing tastes which are altogether apart from them, and thinking so much of better things that these sink into insignificance. If you can so attach yourself to academical, or poetical, or any other studies as to make them a constant and sufficient resource, you will have achieved a conquest over the world which no wealth or extrinsic advantages could give ; for those who possess those advantages (if they set any store by them) are struggling to increase them, and to get on in the world, and courting the society of those who can help them on, and suffering repulses from time to time, and in fact living with as little of the comforts of independence as any other class of persons. Men of riches and rank have only to be ambitious, and their real independence is at an end ; and ambitious they are sure to be if their minds be not engaged with some unworldly pursuits ; for human nature must have objects and hopes before it, and, in the absence of any that are better, worldly objects are sure to present themselves. The only road to independence of

feeling is more open to you than to most men, rich or poor, because you have tastes which, if you are true to them, will make the world and all its ways of very little importance to you.

But do not let either the invitations of a particular taste, or the discouragements you speak of, turn you away from your academical studies. Those studies are the purpose of your life at present, and if the proper purposes of life for the time being have not their due, a man's mind and character will be inevitably injured and enfeebled, nor will he be able to live upon easy terms with himself. You will find the *horæ subsecivæ* more available to you for poetry or any other non-essential, if the essential studies of the day have been duly despatched, than the whole twenty-four hours would be otherwise; for you would want the spring of mind with which a man gets up from a good day's work accomplished. The

> Iam mens prætrepidans avet vagari;
> Iam læti studio pedes vigescunt,

of Catullus describes an elasticity which would send a man forth into the field of poetry with as fresh an impulse as to any other exercise. Moreover, we are not to take so narrow a view of our art as not to perceive that all sorts of studies, and every species of knowledge and intellectual effort, enter into the education which is required in order that we may cultivate it worthily. I have read the verses you enclosed with much pleasure. I think them fanciful

and pretty—not correct. You would find it, I think, a useful sort of self-criticism to resolve your verses into prose, and in that naked form examine the grammatical construction, the meaning, and the metaphor. It is a severe test to put them to—perhaps too severe to be just, unless one made allowances at the same time; but it certainly helps one to find out the faults. I should like to know something of your English poetical reading, whether it lies amongst the poets of the seventeenth century or amongst the moderns, whether with those, 'Musas severiores qui colunt,' or with the lighter authors. Your 'Poet's Dirge' seems to savour a little of such reading as Fletcher's 'Faithful Shepherdess' in the better time of English poetry, or perhaps of Tennyson in the present day.

I would recommend to you to read chiefly in the line of poetry in which you find your taste to lie, but not in that line only. By reading *along* with your taste, you will get an impulse to carry you on, and by reading *beyond* it, you will gradually enlarge your bounds. You should not be content with appreciating the merits which are borne in upon you, as it were, but apply yourself also to discover the merits which others have perceived and which have made a poet famous, though they do not strike you at first sight. I was past your age before I had any real feeling of the merits of Milton and Wordsworth, or any appreciation of the graver rhythmical melodies of our best poets. Possibly you may be in a similar

predicament, and, if so, I would advise you to study these writers carefully and critically. Here, too, you may profit by the process of resolving poetry into prose, for I think you will find that if you take a sonnet or any other poem of Milton's or Wordsworth's and perform this operation upon it, it will always appear that what they wrote had a distinct meaning and purpose, which, when stripped of all its ornaments, remains nevertheless as a substantial product of the mind. Take, for instance, Milton's sonnet on his blindness, beginning 'When I consider how my life is spent, Ere half my days,' &c., &c., and observe how much of doctrine is expressed in it; or Wordsworth's sonnet (I believe the first of his second series of sonnets), beginning 'Scorn not the sonnet,' &c., and observe how much it contains of biography and criticism independently of its eminent imaginative beauty. I should like much to see any of your poetry which you may be disposed to send me. When I asked you whether you had made anything of your poetry, money was not what I was thinking of, for I well know that it is the last thing in the world that a man should expect to get out of poetry, bad, good, or indifferent.

I am sincerely sorry that you are so much in want of companions that suit you at Oxford. It is a great want at your age, and I rather think it is a want which hardly anything but accident will serve to supply; for when men—especially young men—are formally introduced to each other, they seldom

get on well together, though they may be just the men who would have suited if they had fallen in with each other by accident, or in any easy way. We must hope that some one who suits you will come across you some day.

Yours very truly,
H. Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to H—— T——.

Colonial Office, London : December 13, 1838.

My dear Sir,—I thank you much for sending me your little book, which I have read with great interest.

I do not feel at all confident in the justness of any judgment which I may form in such cases. But I should say that most of these verses indicate one or two of the essentials of the poetical faculty—a power of giving expression to imaginative feeling, and of producing rhythmical melody in some of its kinds, those mainly which are pleasing to young ears.

As to faults, you will learn them to more purpose by following out your own misgivings than by suggestions from others. I dare say that when you write incorrectly, you have some vague sense of your error, and probably at the same time a half-conscious inclination to throw a veil over it. The way to improve yourself is to persecute your own meanings with an unsparing rigour ; and one means of testing them is by translating your verse into prose, and inquiring what significancy they may convey when

thus nakedly presented. No verses, it is true, will bear this test in all respects; and there *may be* verses which are good in some respects, and which yet will not bear it at all. But it is still a means of learning particulars about one's verses which might otherwise escape one. The value which the world attaches to correctness and distinctness is not (I think) excessive, although poets, and especially young ones, are often of a different mind. In my own estimation, a high cultivation of the logical faculty is essential to the existence of the poetical power in any of its higher kinds.

I do not know whether your poetical exercitations will ever turn to account in any other way; but at least they will exercise you in the use of language; and, provided they do not supplant other studies and exercises, they cannot fail to do something towards the culture of your understanding. But it is always to be borne in mind that no excellence can be attained in poetry, *per se*, without the acquisition of general knowledge, and the use of intellectual efforts in divers directions, which may seem at first sight to have no immediate bearing upon poetry. For what is there, in truth, mixing itself in any way with the mind, which has not a bearing upon this point if we trace it out?

My advice to you, if advice were worth anything in such matters, would be to cultivate your mind generally, to devote yourself to your academical studies specially, and to yield yourself to poetry in

so far as it forces its way with you, and no farther. 'Sequentem fugit, fugientem sequitur' is perhaps as true of the Muse as of any other person of her sex to whom a man may be disposed to devote himself.

I was glad to see your translations. I thought them prettily done; and at an age when the want is more apt to be that of subject-matter than of expressiveness in language, it is well to be employed in giving shape to another's substance. You can in this way use the power which presses to be used without straining after a body of thought which will not be clasped; and you may at the same time give entertainment to the poetical feeling, which (as you have observed in one of these pieces) can hardly pass through the mind without leaving a deposit, though it may be that no direct result is realised at the moment.

I will return the volume in the way you mention, and I shall always take an interest in seeing what you may write in future.

Yours very sincerely,

H. Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to Southey.

36 South Audley Street: January 1, 1839.

My dear Mr. Southey,—I go poking on with my play as much as my nerves will let me. They are not what they were when 'Van Artevelde' was written, but I think that there is a remnant of

nervous energy left which will yet take root downwards and bear fruit upwards. There is this advantage from writing a work slowly, that it includes the deposit from a longer section of life and a more multiplied suggestion of circumstance. A poem which it has taken six years to write has had in a certain sense six men to write it. The play ('Edwin the Fair') I am now about will want a predominating *persona*, and will depend for its interest on unity of action rather than on the concentration of the interest in one character; but I think that the story will have a life in it which will carry it through in spite of the want (which is no doubt a great one) of a hero paramount.

I am reading Gladstone's book, which I shall send you if he has not. But I dare say he has. It is closely and deeply argumentative, perhaps too much in the nature of a series of propositions and corollaries, for a book which takes so very demonstrative a character leads one to expect what is impossible and to feel thrown out by a postulate. But it is most able and most profound, and written in language which cannot be excelled for solidity and clearness. It is too philosophical to be generally read; but it will raise his reputation on the authority of those who do read it, and will not embarrass him so much in political life as a popularly quotable book on such subjects might be apt to do. His party begin to speak of him as the man who will one day be at their head, and at the head of the Government,

and certainly no man of his standing has yet appeared who seems likely to stand in his way. Two wants, however, may lie across his political career—want of robust health and want of flexibility.

The qualification of bodily strength is becoming every day more indispensable in public business. There is another victim lying on his death-bed, Spearman, the Assistant-Secretary to the Treasury. That place, they say, kills every man who undertakes it—Hill, Stewart, and now Spearman, within the last five or six years. This man had great abilities for business, at least for that business which he was engaged in, an infinite energy and ardour about matters of accompt, a wonderful zeal and fire about pounds, shillings, and pence, and items of estimates. He seemed to me to be always in a state bordering upon inflammatory disease, and, in fact, an enthusiasm for Treasury business has consumed him.

Ever yours affectionately,

H. T.

From Miss Fenwick to Henry Taylor.

Ambleside: January 4, 1839.

There are very few days that I do not see the poet[1] for an hour or two. What strange workings are there in his great mind, and how fearfully strong are all his feelings and affections! If his intellect had been less powerful they must have destroyed him

[1] Wordsworth.

long ago; but even in the midst of his strongest emotions his attention may be attracted to some intellectual speculation, or his imagination excited by some of those external objects which have such influence over him; and his feelings subside like the feelings of a child, and he will go out and compose some beautiful sonnet. Many has he written this winter, for the remembrances of Italy seem to have risen on him, and he has recorded them in a series of sonnets as beautiful as any he has ever written; but, beautiful as they are, I cannot but regret that he has not been going on with his great work, and embodied these remembrances in it. This he promises to do from day to day, but still nothing is done but another *last* sonnet, and I fear nothing else ever will be done, though I feel sure that his mind has lost none of its poetical power, and that in many respects what he writes now is more perfect than at any period of his life. But he has not the same power over his *will*; he cannot set himself seriously down to compose; he can do but as the spirit moves him. Were his feelings in a happier state this power might return to him again, and this—how is this to be effected? I have witnessed many a sad scene, yet my affection and admiration, even my respect, goes on increasing with my increasing knowledge of him. The Crabb [1] seems to study him, but he can only know him very superficially; he sees but the man of genius, or the simple, kind-hearted, oddest, irritable man in his own

[1] Henry Crabb Robinson.

family ; but the *inner man* he cannot know ; yet what he does know I dare say the world will know too some time or other. He is very averse to hearing anything about himself; he cares very little for public opinion on the whole, yet he feels he might be annoyed by the detail of it in its separate parts ; of the judgment of posterity he has no doubt, nor of the joy he will have in it ; and this anticipation is doubtless better for him than present fame. Coleridge was staying with him at the time of De Quincey's visit—what a rich seven months to an intellectual man!

From Henry Taylor to Miss Fenwick.

January, 1839.

First, let me tell you that I am rich. I have been looking into my accounts for the past year, and I find that I have saved 429*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*, which added to savings previously invested, makes my money in the stocks amount to 742*l.*, and I have 270*l.* in hand to begin the year with, and nothing owing. So you may speak after the Dutch grammar and say, 'I love my good cousin.' I find that what I spent on myself in the year was 378*l.* 18*s.*, which seems tolerably economical in a man who has nearly a thousand a year, but of this 37 8*l.* 18*s.* I find that more than a hundred pounds was spent on dress, which looks as if I must be a great coxcomb.

The analysis of a man's expenditure for a year

ought to tell a great deal about him, if it were duly considered.

Your account of Wordsworth is exceedingly interesting, and the more you write about him to me and others the better, not only for the pleasure it gives at present, but also because your letters will probably be the best records of him that will remain, unless you do what you ought to do by him, which is perhaps not to be expected of you. No doubt he would himself prefer being transmitted by your hand to any other mode of personal conveyance to posterity. That such men as De Quincey write about him makes it all the more desirable that it should be done by persons of a different character. I understand him through you much better than I used to do. Indeed, with all his simplicity and nakedness, I think him very difficult to understand, at least by means of such intercourse as I have had with him.

Gladstone's book is variously spoken of. Some people say it is crazy and nonsensical; others, that it will ruin him in political life; many, that it is bigoted and papistical; Stephen, that it is a book of great majesty, dignity, and strength. What says Wordsworth? and what you?

From Miss Fenwick to Henry Taylor.

Ambleside : January 26, 1839.

It will do you no harm to be rich, my dear cousin, so I am glad that you are a *little* nearer being so. To have the *importance* of *trifles* constantly pressed upon the attention by confined circumstances must always be irksome to those who have none of that kind of activity in their natures to which one gives the name of fidgetiness, a very useful quality when it spends itself on the details of domestic life, but disagreeable enough to those who derive no advantage from it. This sentence has just been suggested to me by the sight of a worthy neighbour who just *passed* my window (I am thankful for that), else I never could have got at it, when I was thinking of you, unless it were that sometimes the extreme of anything suggests the contrast. Notwithstanding your great expenditure in dress, I question that you have thirteen coats of *various degrees of merit*, which a friend of mine[1] has just assured me he has, and yet that not one of them was suitable to the day without some *supplemental aid*. There is certainly nothing peculiar in the day, nor in the meritorious coats ; it was fortunate, however, that the difficulty could be obviated (' by a cape of my daughter's '), else I should have been deprived of a very delightful visit this morning. It was very striking to me to see Wordsworth and Southey together, and to stay

[1] Wordsworth.

with one after being so much with the other. The two most remarkable men of their day are certainly the most dissimilar ; unlike in all their ways, unlike in their moral and intellectual nature. What a wide range has goodness and wisdom between them ! It cannot but enlarge the mind of any one to be called to the contemplation of such *diversity* in excellence, and improve the heart to have its affections drawn to what is worthy of them. In loving and admiring both of them, I think I still find the old poet of the Mount best suited to my taste, perhaps from knowing him better ; I feel quite sure that I know *all his* faults, all that they have done, are doing, and may do, whereas I feel as if I did not altogether understand the Laureate, and therefore do not feel quite so sure that I should like all that I do not know of him. Of course, I do not imagine my knowledge of either of them extends to their intellectual natures, nor altogether to their moral natures either, excepting as far as it may take a *wrong direction* ; I am unfortunately competent to go any length in that ; and I think I never love a person thoroughly till I know how far they are liable to take the wrong way. I always want to have as little room for my imagination to work in as possible where evil is concerned ; it is best employed about beauty and goodness.

I have not yet read Gladstone's work ; it has been in such great request here, first at the Mount, then at Dr. Arnold's. Wordsworth says it is worthy of all attention, and it seems to have his approval, though

not his entire approbation. He seems to think that Gladstone goes too far in his idea of the authority of the Church as derived from apostolical descent; but at the same time he says that, to be decided in his opinion on this point, he ought to know a great deal more of ecclesiastical history than he does, and be more deeply read in the Fathers than he is; and also that he must read Mr. Gladstone's book again, before he can see clearly what he *does claim* for the Church.

I do not recollect whether I have ever named Crabb Robinson to you since he has been here. I really like him very well, and never cease wondering how he has managed to preserve so much kindliness and courtesy in his bachelor state. He and old Wishaw are the only exceptions I have met with to the tendency it has to deaden all love but self-love; but these two old men seem both to love themselves and to make others love them. I remember making out to my own satisfaction that Wishaw preserved his benevolence through the want of his leg, a want that made him feel his dependence on his fellow-creatures, while it called forth their sympathy and kindness, and all those little attentions which cultivate affection, both in the giver and receiver of them; and thus I imagined that the heart of old Wishaw was kept humble, grateful, and loving. But Crabb Robinson is sound in wind and limb, and requires no assistance or indulgence from his fellow-creatures on the score of any physical infirmity. How comes he, then, to be so kind and considerate to all who are

about him? I thought the other day, when I was contemplating him while he was asleep (he always sleeps when he is not talking), that his *ugliness* had done that for him which the want of a leg had done for old Wishaw; it was great enough to excite compassion and kindness, which awakened his affections as well perhaps as a wife and children would have done, and made him the kind, serviceable creature he is. Perhaps you may never have observed C. R. enough to be aware of his ugliness, or of its great variety—a series of ugliness in quick succession, one look more ugly than the one that preceded it, particularly when he is asleep; on which occasions little Willy contemplates him with great interest and often enquires 'what kind of a face has Mr. Robinson?' 'A very nice face,' is the constant answer; and then a different look comes, and another enquiry of 'what kind of face was that?' 'A *nice face* too.' What an odd idea must he have of nice faces! But he will always like the remarkably nice faces of Mr. Robinson. When he is awake he quite out-talks the old poet, so in the mornings he often comes to me as a good listener. I like the Crabb's talk very well; he knows a great deal of all the most remarkable people of the last half-century. The Arnold family I believe I have mentioned to you. The Dr. is delightful in his family, and his family all to his honour. He is right-hearted and right-headed then, though wrong-headed for the world. Were you fifteen years younger I should say, Come and see Jane

Arnold, a sweet, pretty, intelligent girl of seventeen, enthusiastic about everything that is good and beautiful.

Ambleside : March 28, 1839.

Our journey was postponed for a week, that the beloved old poet might accomplish the work that he had in hand, the revising of his grand autobiographical poem, and leaving it in a state fit for publication. At this he has been labouring for the last month, seldom less than six or seven hours in the day, or rather one ought to say the whole day, for it seemed always in his mind—quite a possession; and much, I believe, he has done to it, expanding it in some parts, retrenching it in others, and perfecting it in all. I could not have imagined the labour that he has bestowed on all his works had I not been so much with him at this time. Every evening that the weather would admit of it he has been here, and has told me of his day's work, of the difficulties he has had and how he had overcome them, of the *beautiful* additions he had made, and all the why and wherefore of each alteration—all lessons in the art of poetry strangely bestowed on me, and lost as far as *this world* goes ; but who knows but that this cultivation may not make me more fit for that society into which I trust to be admitted in another? Nothing appears more remarkable to me in him than the constant and firm persuasion of his own *greatness*, which maintained itself through neglect and ridicule and contempt, and when in devoting himself to that culture

which he conceived best adapted to it he encountered a life of poverty and obscurity, and must have incurred the censure of his friends, as leading a life of idleness originating in self-conceit and vanity. And yet who in all other things desires sympathy more earnestly, or is more sensible to praise? The other evening I was peculiarly struck by his sensibility on this point, and I cannot forbear giving you the little trait. On his arrival I saw something had occurred which had delighted him exceedingly. He had appeared quite radiant with joy, and I told him I saw that he had been very successful in his morning's work; he said he had indeed, and that he was sure that he had never done better in his life, and then he continued: 'And I must tell you what Mary said when I was dictating to her this morning' (she always writes for him). "Well, William, I declare you are cleverer than ever,"' and the tears started into his eyes, and he added: 'It is not often I have had such praise; she has always been sparing of it.' He knew it was no empty praise, for he cultivates the minds of all around him, to the discernment of beauty, and how much more this companion of his life for the last six-and-thirty years! My dear cousin, may you find a wife 'whose applause to you may be more than fame' after as long a period! How many blessings would be included in that one! Mrs. Wordsworth has told me since that at no former period has she known his mind so clear and free, or when his thoughts seemed to come from him so *perfectly*, and

that she *does think* him greater than ever. This poetic fit seems to have been attended with less physical disturbance than usual and less irritation, though it has not been without its storms and darker moments. These all are laid open, both by himself and others ; nothing is concealed at the Mount, or need be.

From Henry Taylor to ——.[1]

Downing Street: April 17, 1839.

What you want is, I suppose, something in the nature of Mr. Wilberforce's Journal.[2]

Wednesday, April 3.—Dined with Lady Munro, with whom, the Fred. Elliots, Miss Perry, and two young ladies from school ; I went to the play (very like Wilberforce !). The youngest of the party were, as usual, the most interesting ; one was fifteen or sixteen, the other seventeen. Neither had been at a play in London before. I stood so as to see, not the scene itself, but its reflection in the face of the youngest girl. Her face every now and then broke into a flash of laughter, and then suddenly resumed an expression of serious wonder and intentness. Poor young lady ! I hope going to the play may have done her no harm (very like me !).

Thursday, April 4.—Dined with Mr. Richardson, with whom I had scraped an acquaintance on account

[1] Sir Henry Taylor has pencilled on his copy of this letter the words, ' To whom ? '

[2] Hence, of course, the jesting signature to this letter, ' William Wilberforce.'

of his eldest daughter; she managed her dinner-party well—that is, with ease and simplicity—doing well, because she knew how to do nothing.

Friday, April 5.—Went to hear the 'Messiah' at Exeter Hall. Miss Wyndham's singing of 'He was despised and rejected of men' is to me the greatest attraction of the performance. There is a sadness and an ease almost like the neglectedness of despondency in Miss Wyndham's style of singing which is peculiarly suitable to that air. But she did not sing quite so well as usual. I observed how much more of civility one meets with in the body of the hall (where I was obliged to go for want of a reserved seat, and where the company are not quite ladies and gentlemen) than in any assemblage of one's own class. I came late, and all the benches were full; but before the first part was over, a young man offered me his seat for a while, and would have let me occupy it as long as I chose. To be sure, he was a very striking looking person, and not like an ordinary member of any class of society.

Saturday, April 6.—Went with the Fred. Elliots at half an hour's notice to drink tea with Mr. V. and Lady F., or, as they are generally called, Lady F. and Mr. V. I hardly know another instance of my having been asked to go and drink tea with a man and his wife and nobody else but the friends I went with. But if the people are agreeable, how much more pleasant such a sort of visit is than going to a party! There I saw a couple of human beings, male and

female, in their life as they live ; I perceived indications of what they thought of each other, and could guess how they stood affected to each other, and knew something thereby of the results of a young widow of rank and some attractions of manner and appearance marrying a good-looking and good-natured fellow, who would have made a very fair man of fashion if he had been bred to it, but not feeling firm in his position—at present, at least—exposes his wife to be more solicitous about him than is necessary or expedient. He seems to me to have great good-nature, and if she had strength and skill to deal fairly with him, I see no reason why she should not cure him of coxcombry, and make a gentlemanly man of him. But she should not begin by being ashamed of him.

Monday, April 8.—Went to Lady Davy's in the evening ; spoke to no one but Captain Stewart, with whom I discussed the three Elliot sisters and their brothers Fred and Charles. Lady Davy gave a discourse on the nature and attributes of love. Lady Charlotte Lindsay sat next her, and twitched in a word now and then, but could do no more. I came away, because I thought I knew as much about it as Lady Davy.

Tuesday, April 9.—Dined with Rogers. The company were : Colonel and Lady Mary Fox, Mr. and Madame Van de Weyer, Mr. and Mrs. Brinsley Sheridan, Lady Seymour, Mrs. Norton, Mons. Rio, Charles Sheridan the elder, and Edmund Phipps.

The dinner was very agreeable to me, and I thought that Mrs. Brinsley Sheridan was very pretty. They say her beauty has come to her since her marriage, and that it is owing to her connection with the Sheridans. Her eyes are really very fine when one comes to look into them. Afterwards I went for a quarter of an hour to Mrs. ——'s ball, to see the three young ladies who swam about in the narrow seas when I was at Dover. They do not look quite so well out of the water as in it, nor does one see so much of them, but nevertheless they are good-looking, good-humoured girls.

The above concludes one week, which I think is enough.

Yours very sincerely,
WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

From Miss Fenwick to Henry Taylor.

June 9, 1839.

I had the beloved, fervent old poet always by me to tell me everything.[1] He himself was doubtless my great interest in these most interesting scenes to him. The remembrances of his youth seemed all pleasant to him, though he had no University honours to remember, nor had he ever aspired to any. He said he always felt '*that he was not for that time or place.*' What mad presumption would it have been deemed had he uttered aloud then

[1] At Cambridge.

what he always felt! Even now, it could be hardly borne by his contemporaries. The room that he occupied at St. John's was not known; a Fellow of that College who accompanied us when he took us to it will not suffer it again to be forgotten. I remembered the description of it in his autobiographical poem, and most faithful it was; one of the meanest and most dismal apartments it must be in the whole University; 'but here' (he said in showing it) 'I was as joyous *as a lark*.' There was a dark closet taken off it for his bed. The present occupant had pushed his bed into the darkest corner, but he showed us how he drew his bed to the door, that he might see the top of the window in Trinity College Chapel, under which stands that glorious statue of Sir Isaac Newton. This, too, he has recorded in his poem.

The present Master of Trinity seems as if he were ready to take his place in a frame, and I think would adorn one if there was any painter who could do him justice. The impression he makes is very different there from that he made in a London drawing-room. There he seemed but an ordinary little old clergyman, but at Trinity Lodge he seemed quite in keeping with the place—a gentle, yet dignified, old Abbot he might have been, and learned in all the learning of the olden time. It was exquisite taste in him not to marry again; a wife in Trinity Lodge would have been a false quantity in the composition of the establishment there. It was quite perfect without one. He did all the honours and hospitali-

ties in the best and kindest way possible ; and everybody seemed at their ease, and comfortable, as I am sure I was. It was curious to see the two brothers together, so differently eminent, one so pre-eminent : their feelings for each other seem not to go farther than brotherly regard, respect, and admiration ; there was no seeking of each other's society, and they had not more of it than others had.

I liked my visit to the Arnolds, too, very much. I never saw parents so natural and pleasant in their family ; their talk and manner to their children was exactly what one felt was likely to cultivate their hearts and heads, but quite undesigned and unpremeditated, just because they themselves thought and felt right. They made no difference for the children or young people being in the room, nor need they. I have hardly ever, excepting there, been where children were a part of the society without being sorry on their account, fearing that they were getting no good ; they all seemed loving creatures too.

[Undated ; but certainly July or August, 1839.]

The mail dropped him at my door, and I had a full history of all he had seen, heard, and thought since we parted, and then I accompanied him to Rydal Mount, where I had it all again, and should be glad of it, as the children are of their stories, again and again. He was much touched with his reception at Oxford, which seems to have been *heartfelt* ; no such acclamations had been heard excepting on the appear-

ance of the Duke of Wellington. These, however, did not much move him, but when the public orator spoke of him as the poet of humanity, and as having through the power of love and genius made us feel as nothing the artificial distinctions which separate the different classes of society, and that 'we have all one common heart,' then he felt he was understood and recognised, and was thankful. Nothing seemed to have escaped him in the scene—the place itself, the people, the light and shade, the expression of everything, the impression it all made. I wish you had heard it all.

From the Hon. Mrs. Norton to Henry Taylor.[1]

Bolton Street: Monday [October, 1839].

I send you what the children call a 'parting present,' having once before had that generous intention when you left a whip here by mistake, but at that time thought better of it.

I hope you will be happy; there is no one, I believe, deserves happiness more; and I also hope, when you have power over the destiny of another, that you will remember that the most intelligent woman God ever made has something of the *child* in *disposition*, and that the indulgence shown to children is as necessary in their case (if you mean either to be happy) as with an infant of three years old. Do not laugh at me for lecturing my betters. It is only when

[1] Written on the occasion of Henry Taylor's marriage.

I think of some fresh and uncommenced destiny that I look gravely and sadly back at all the mistakes in my own, and I am convinced that, as we bring more courage to the endurance of the great than the lesser evils of our lives, so we grant more indulgence to the real and positive faults of our every-day companions than to their moods, their habits, their small waywardnesses, the points where they neither fit our own dispositions nor our preconceived notions of what would suit and please us. I hope all will go well with you and yours. We start on Friday morning for our Italian tour; it is a great change for me. I hope it will be both pleasant and beneficial; I shall then feel more as if I had broken and disjointed my past from my future than I have yet been able to do.

With every good wish, believe me,

Yours very truly,

CAROLINE NORTON.

From Henry Taylor to his Father.

16 Blandford Square: January 23, 1841.

The opportunities of transacting my poetical affairs are few and far between. But this has one advantage which may possibly be in itself a compensation for the slowness of my progress and the paucity of production. It enables me to embody in what I do write the experience and suggestions of a longer period of life. 'Van Artevelde' was supplied from the granaries where many years' crops had been

laid up, and four or five years of various thoughts and occurrences and states of feeling will contribute to 'Edwin the Fair.' The great thing to take care of is to note down the observations of life as they occur, so that if it be long before they find a place in one's poem they may not be lost or forgotten, but bide their time in safety. I often make my notes in blank verse, so as to have them in a more prepared state, and they will generally take the most lively form when they are first prompted by living circumstance. And there is hardly anything that will not find a place fit for it in a play of five acts, if it is always at hand, though certainly one should beware of being in a hurry to realise and of forcing things in head and shoulders.

From Henry Taylor to his Wife.

16 Blandford Square: June 8, 1841.

We went to see Rachel last night, and were pleased and interested with her personally and thought her very graceful; and, considering all her disadvantages—her youth, physical weakness, and bad education—we thought she might very possibly be a person of considerable natural endowments. But nothing could persuade me that, taking her as she stands, she is a great actress, and I do not see any very strong indications that she is to be one in future. If her health continues weak, it is hardly possible that she should, and not probable that she

will live. As to defects of education, they might have been supplied under other circumstances, but the world, which is now exaggerating her merits, will stand in the way of that. No one goes to school amidst showers of applause, and when the consequences are apparent, and she makes no advance, the world and its applause will leave her. There is nothing worse for an artist in any walk of art than premature success.

I was more than ever impressed with the demerits of French tragedies; it is a province of literature to which there is no entrance or admission for my mind. It must have its high and low degrees, no doubt, and Racine and Corneille could not be pre-eminent in it without possessing some great excellence. But it is an excellence which I am disqualified for appreciating, either from habits and tastes which refuse it, or from want of an intimate knowledge of the language, or from some other want or limitation. And at the same time the sins and poverty of this manner of writing are so apparent even to a foreigner, that it requires an enthusiasm for its virtues to make him forget them even for a moment. As to me, the sense of them is the thing uppermost from beginning to end.

From William Wordsworth to Henry Taylor.

Rydal Mount: November 8, 1841.

My dear Mr. Taylor,—You and Mr. Lockhart have been very kind in taking so much trouble about the sonnets.[1] I have altered them as well as I could to meet your wishes, and trust that you will find them improved, as I am sure they are where I have adopted your own words.

As to double rhymes, I quite agree with Mr. Lockhart that in the case disapproved by him their effect is weak, and I believe will generally prove so in a couplet at the close of a sonnet. But, having written so many, I do not scruple, but rather like to employ them occasionally, though I have done it much less in proportion than my great masters, especially Milton, who has two, out of his eighteen, with double rhymes.

I am sure it will be a great advantage to these pieces to be presented to the public with your comments in the 'Quarterly Review,' as you propose. But I must return to your suggestions. Where I have a large amount of sonnets in series I have not been unwilling to start sometimes with a logical connection of a 'Yet' or a 'But.' Here, however, as the series is not long, I wished that each sonnet should stand independent of such formal tie; and, therefore, though with some loss, I have not followed your alteration, '*Yet* not alone, nor chiefly.' Besides,

[1] Wordsworth's 'Sonnets on the Punishment by Death.'

and this by-the-by, 'Not alone' is less neat than 'solely,' or 'only' rather.

Mr. Elliot,[1] even if he should be disturbed by the clamour of the public press against him, will find abundant compensation in your zealous and judicious opposition to it; and I have little doubt that his explanation will justify the most favourable of your presumptions in his behalf. He must rejoice in your kindness, and that of his other friends and his relatives.

Ever faithfully yours,
Wm. Wordsworth.

From James Spedding to Henry Taylor.

Washington: April 24, 1842.

My dear Taylor,—There is nothing remarkable in the outside of Washington, except the contrast between what it is and what it was evidently meant to be. The public buildings are some of them very handsome, and all great; the streets magnificent for length and width, only there are no houses on either side, built or building. It is like a small country town of enormous size straggling over the site of a great city. And I fancy that it will always remain very much as it is. There is nothing to draw wealth, population, or fashion this way except Con-

[1] Charles Elliot. See Henry Taylor's *Autobiography*, vol. i. pp. 297–305.

gress, and Congress repels rather than attracts the better kind of people.

Of the inside I have not yet seen enough to judge; not that I have not seen Senators spit upon the carpet, young ladies walking about the streets by themselves, young men wearing long hair, ploughmen and pilots in dress coats worn threadbare, and many other things of the same kind—all which would do very well to illustrate the evils of Republican institutions if one were writing a book of patriotic or fashionable impressions. But I have not seen enough of the people to know how they act and how they feel in the substantial relations, businesses, and emergencies of life. Of their manners I think I may say —no, I think I had better not say even that. You may, however, so far satisfy the curiosity of Mrs. Taylor as to assure her that, though I have seen many pretty faces (for pretty faces are, I think, more frequent here than in England, unless it be that one has not yet had time to grow sick of the ordinary American prettiness), I have not met with anything that need alarm her on my account. The Secretary of State did indeed observe, when I praised the beauty of the moonlight nights here, that 'they were just the nights for a young man to fall in love in.' But I flatter myself I am not to be cheated out of the possession of my soul by a little moonlight. And indeed I shall not be here long enough to become dangerously acquainted with any face, however harmonious.

I shall probably have opportunities enough to become acquainted with the leading political characters, who are all extremely civil and seem easy to get on with ; but I shall not trouble my friends with my first impressions, unless I find that that is the only way to clear my own mind of them.

Has Wordsworth written no sonnet on the Income Tax ? or is it only a letter in the ' Kendal Mercury ' showing how unequally it presses upon Stamp Distributors ? Are not the ' monied worldlings ' somewhat dismayed ? For my own part, I am of the ' sound, healthy children of the God of Heaven.' I fear no budget ; I have much satisfaction in reflecting that, however Sir Robert lays on his taxes, he cannot get much out of me.

And what sort of a night is it with you, this 25th of April ?—(it must be the morning of the 26th by the way, and too early for you to know anything about it). Here it is rich moonlight, as warm as summer. The song of the frogs is like a shrill whirling machine, only there is one that has more of the nightingale than his fellows. I have laid by one article of dress after another, till I am quite unfit for company—almost the thing itself. Good night.

Ever yours,

J. Spedding.

From Henry Taylor to Miss Fenwick.

16 Blandford Square : May 11, 1842.

You will have a couple of extra reasons to wish to hear from me now, being alone yourself and the Wordsworths being within my range of news. They seem to be in capital health and spirits—at least he is ; I have not seen so much of her, but she was very cheerful and nice when I did see her. He breakfasted here on Saturday, and we had to meet him Lord Monteagle, Charles Elliot, Sir Francis Doyle, Lady Harriet Baring, and Everett the American Minister, and he was very pleasant, and so was everybody. I wish you had been one of us. And yesterday I almost spent the day with him, and it was well for me that I could walk pretty stoutly, for, beginning by telling me that he had a lame leg and could not walk as well as usual, he walked from Upper Spring Street (which is just on the other side the New Road) to Upper Grosvenor Street, from thence to the end of Grosvenor Place, thence to Belgrave Square, then to Cadogan Place, then to the Colonial Office (where he dined off some scraps and fragments of the office-keeper's dinner), then to the House of Lords, and when we came out of that (I having been long uneasy about the fatigue he was undergoing, not to mention the lameness) he proposed that we should take an omnibus to Baker Street, look in upon Mrs. Wordsworth, and then take half an hour's walk in the Regent's Park ! And it was done accordingly.

And from the beginning of the day to the end never did he cease talking, and for much of the time with his best vivacity.

He had been struck with the beauty of some of the houses in Grosvenor Place, which have their fronts clothed with creeping laburnum in full blossom, as we passed in the morning, and I observed that all the tide and torrent of his discourse, and all the transactions which he took so much interest in with Lord Clarendon and Lord Monteagle about the Copyright Bill, and all the pleasure which he had in meeting with James Stephen and others, and in short all the efforts and energies of the day, had gone over the image of these laburnums without effacing it; and they were amongst the first things that he mentioned to Mrs. Wordsworth in the evening.

From T. B. Macaulay to Henry Taylor.

Albany: June 20, 1842.

Dear Taylor,—Many thanks for the little volume.[1] I have read it once. But one reading is not sufficient to entitle me to pronounce a judgment. However, I cannot delay sending you my acknowledgments and communicating my first impressions. I think that, considered as an intellectual effort, the tragedy is fully equal to 'Van Artevelde.' Indeed, I think that it contains finer specimens of diction. It moves the feelings less, or at least it moves my feelings. But

[1] 'Edwin the Fair.'

this I attribute to a cause which was perhaps beyond your control. Van Artevelde and his Italian mistress are persons of far higher powers and stronger characters than Edwy and his Queen. And the cracking of tough natures is the most affecting thing that a dramatist can exhibit. Othello is the great example. Poor Edwy and his bride go down like the willows before the hurricane.

I should say that you have succeeded on the whole better in exhibiting the character of the age and of the two parties than the character of individuals. In this respect the play reminds me of Shakspeare's 'Henry the Sixth,' which, though not eminent, at least among his works, for delineation of particular men and women, exhibits a peculiar state of society with a vivacity and truth such as no historian has approached.

Your monastic and secular factions are admirable. Dunstan I cannot make up my mind about. I must wait for another reading. I am more and more struck by what I think I once mentioned to you, the resemblance between your poetry and Schiller's. I wish to God you would take that great subject of which he touches only a portion, the greatest subject of modern times, Mary Queen of Scots, and give her life and death in three parts. The first part should end with the death of Darnley, and the second with the flight into England.

Ever yours truly,

T. B. Macaulay.

From James Spedding to Hon. Mrs. Henry Taylor.

Washington : June 26, 1842.

. . . . In America the business of legislation is suspended for the rest of the week, because two members of Congress are just dead. For when a member dies here they have a sermon at the Capitol, a solemn public burial, and a recess, a custom which we special missionaries ridicule (among ourselves), and pronounce it humbug and hypocrisy—humbug, because a man is not really more to be regretted because he is a member of Congress ; hypocrisy, because the surviving members are not really so much afflicted as to be unfitted for business. For my own part, however, I secretly applaud this custom, and should be for keeping it up as long as the general feeling will bear it, as contributing to invest the function with a certain dignity and solemnity in the popular eye ; and as for hypocrisy, what ceremonial observance is there in the world which is not attended with more or less of that, if you choose to call it by so harsh a term ? Abolish hypocrisy, insist upon every man seeming just as he is, and you abolish all social forms and manners ; abolish forms and manners, and society will not hold together for a month. Therefore, I do not grudge your dead senator his sermon, nor your living senators their holiday. But this is doctrine which I keep for Blandford Square ; if broached here, it would be in a minority—one to three. In America (and by America you will under-

stand that I mean a small section of an inconsiderable town in an unimportant district of the United States), the manners of the men are more formal than in England, the manners of the women less so. And I cannot understand why. Not that the men are so distant to strangers as we are—on the contrary ; but among themselves you see none that seem (if you judge by their manners) to be on free and easy terms. Two men who mess together in the same boarding-house, sit next one another in the Senate all day, belong to the same political party, and probably sleep in the same room, never seem to meet each other at a friend's house without a formal bow, a formal shake of the hand, and formal inquiry after the state of each other's health. Two Englishmen under the same circumstances would meet with a careless nod. The women strike me as remarkably simple and unaffected in their manners, and easy to converse with. They do not keep one standing so long in that awful vestibule of fashionable commonplace, through which you Englishwomen (I don't mean you) must be approached ; but let one come without more circumstance at what they think. You feel that you are exchanging thoughts with a reasonable soul, not trying the capacities of a wonderful image, wonderful for its power of imitating human speech and gestures and the motions of the countenance. I have a half-grown theory to account for this, which I may perhaps communicate to you to-morrow if I have time. But I am now going to retire, as they call it in this

country, when I have taken one more look at the stars.

> At eve a dry cicala sung,
> There came a sound as of the sea ;
> Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
> And leaned upon the balcony.
>
> There, all in spaces rosy-bright,
> Large Hesper glittered on her tears,
> And deepening through the silent spheres,
> Heaven over Heaven rose the night.

Certainly a man may speak well of the American stars.

June 28 (for last night, you must know, was not the 26th, which is my birthday, but the 27th, which is the anniversary of the execution of Dr. Dodd).—Well, my theory is—and you may discuss it with Stephen, for it connects itself with an old dispute between him and me—that it is because the women in America are better educated than the men, and generally acknowledged to be so. While the men are talking about dollars, they are reading books ; and so it comes that the capacity of your American woman is recognised by others and felt by herself, and she feels responsible for the use of it. Now, your Englishwoman is, generally speaking, not so well educated as your Englishman, that is to say, the fashionable female education is an inferior and superficial thing compared with the fashionable male education in England. Whereupon men get into the way of treating a woman like a 'fair defect of nature' —a thing to amuse and be amused, a creature with

pretty perverse ways, created not that she might think and judge, but that she might entertain mankind with humours and graceful weaknesses, a creature to whom it is pedantry to talk sense, and from whom it is bad manners to expect it. And as a distinguished writer has observed that the world will commonly end by making men what it thinks them, so it is with women. They are treated like toys, till they forget that they are anything better, and learn to think it modesty and a feminine grace when they absolve themselves from the responsibility which lies in all reasonable creatures to use their reason fairly. And hence that atmosphere of assumed interest, vacant vivacity, and frothy talk, which makes your average English miss so formidable to a man who reverences as I do the qualities which God has so specially endowed womankind with, and which He intended them to cultivate and exercise (of course, present company—*i.e.* all my female acquaintance—is excepted). I beg that before I return all Englishwomen may be convinced that they were made to think and to judge and to know; and that all sensible men (except perhaps one) value them for their sense, not for their nonsense. They may read what they like best, and acquire what accomplishments they please, but they are to remember that their gifts of reason and speech were not given them to be abused.

From Henry Taylor to T. B. Macaulay.

[November, 1842.]

My dear Macaulay,—On my return to town I have found the copy of your book,[1] which you have been good enough to send me, and I am very much obliged to you for it. I have read it more than once and with great pleasure—the 'Battle of the Lake Regillus' with the greatest, because in that the action and what may be called the passion of war, the *torva voluptas*, is crossed and exalted by other appeals to the imagination. In the 'Virginia' the other appeals are, I think, more to the feelings and less to the imagination. But in all of them you have told your stories, to my mind, with great force and vivacity, with much picturesqueness of effect, and in a heartily warlike spirit.

Your design seems to me to have involved great difficulties, and some which, whatever might be the execution, could not but interfere with first effects. You had to dislocate the ballad style and metre you have used from its close association with the Scotch border and the middle ages, as well as to bring it to blend with your own themes. Still, I do not doubt that you have chosen the best metre for your purpose, though I think that you have used one or two words which, with a view to the dislocation I speak of, might better have been avoided. 'Trysting-place' and 'Trysting-day' are words which, in my ears

[1] The *Lays of Ancient Rome.*

at least, remand the imagination to the Scottish border.

You had also to detach your readers from the learned interests and antiquarian problems which the subjects (even without the prefaces) must have suggested, and to get them adrift on the broad currents of human passion. My own interest and pleasure in the 'Lays' is so incomparably greater in the poetry of them than in anything else, that I scarcely speak on this point from what I have myself felt. But I should imagine that learned readers might look at them at first with a divided interest, considering them too much as curiosities to be altogether passive to their poetic spirit.

But, these difficulties notwithstanding, I feel persuaded that they must have great success both with learned and unlearned readers, and both first and last, and I am very glad you have betaken yourself to poetry, and I hope you will go on in it.

Believe me, yours very sincerely,

H. Taylor.

From T. B. Macaulay to Henry Taylor.

Albany: November 16, 1842.

Dear Taylor,—Many thanks for your letter and for your kind and lenient criticism. I am glad that you found anything to like in the 'Lays.' The public has been much kinder to them than I at all expected. Indeed, I attribute the favour which they

have found in the eyes of readers chiefly to this, that everybody predicted an utter failure. Where nothing good is looked for, a very little goes a great way. I shall not, however, take your advice and cry double or quits, but, like a sober, cool-headed black-leg, shall rise with my first winnings in my pocket.

To turn to your own poetical plans, which are of much more consequence to the world than mine, I cannot help again pressing you to give us a great and extended drama on the life of Mary Queen of Scots. Three parts of five acts each—the length of Shakespeare's 'Henry the Sixth'—would be sufficient. The first part might end with the murder of Darnley; the second with the flight into England; the third with the execution. The savage nobles, the fierce Protestant preachers, the foreign minions, the conspirators, the ministers of Elizabeth, Elizabeth herself, and, above all, Mary, would furnish you with such subjects for art as, I believe, are nowhere else to be found. The work ought to be the serious business of years, and, if executed as I believe you could execute it, would live as long as our language. I see no reason to doubt that you are capable of equalling Wallenstein, and I know nothing in the German language so evidently built for immortality as Wallenstein.

Ever yours truly,

T. B. Macaulay.

From Aubrey de Vere to Henry Taylor.

Exeter College, Oxford : June 8, 1843.

I must tell you that on arriving here I went, as in duty bound, to pay my respects to Dr. Pusey. He has been very ill for a considerable period, suffering constantly from low fever. I found him lying on the sofa and apparently unable to rise, encompassed on all sides by folios. No other man have I ever seen so like a saint. The expression of holiness, humility, and charity about him makes a face, in itself ugly, a most beautiful object to contemplate. You look at him and see at once that he is a person whom it is actually impossible to offend personally, and who in the paroxysms of disease would give thanks for his sufferings, simply believing that they were sent as fatherly chastisements and would leave a benediction behind. I perceived very soon that his entire unselfishness has preserved him from all affliction as regards himself in consequence of this iniquitous and ignominious sentence with which he has been branded. There is, in fact, no drop of bitterness in his whole composition, nothing that can turn sour. He spoke very kindly of the Vice-Chancellor, and insisted frequently that we must not get angry, and that if the injustice was borne well it would ultimately redound to the good of the Church—'the only subject worth a moment's consideration.' He is publishing his sermon with a selection of passages from our old Divines illustrating his statements. He says that he

has asserted nothing in his sermon beyond what his former writings contain, and if so I can myself affirm that he says no more than our greatest theologians have said, and that the early Church (to whom our Church is ever appealing) not only affirmed but embodied in her offices. The crisis is an awful one, far exceeding in danger any that we have had for many a year. If the Low Churchmen imagine that they can put down the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, they might as well (as Southey said on some occasion) try to put down Helvellyn. It is the very centre and citadel of the universal and hereditary faith, as distinguished from the private opinions and caprices of modern interpreters. No concession whatever can be made on the question. Our Church has, as we maintain, plainly put forward the high view of this Sacrament, at least if the words 'verily and indeed' be plain. It has, at all events, been hitherto admitted that her expressions admit of the primitive interpretation. And if those in authority choose now to limit the latitude of interpretation against High Church principles, while they allow of any degree of laxity on the part of our semi-dissenters, the result must be that our ship runs on the rocks and goes to pieces. The matter is only now beginning. The University at large will probably reverse the Vice-Chancellor's decision; the bishops will be appealed to, and I fear for the result; they are timid men, and timid physicians use the most violent remedies. In the meantime nothing else is talked of, and even

Oxford would be disturbed if such a thing were possible. It is working intensely, yet scarcely feels the tumult it spreads around ; it is as free from agitation as the central drop at the bottom of a whirlpool.

From James Stephen to Henry Taylor.

Alverstoke, Gosport : December 19, 1843.

My dear Taylor,—These are the Christmas holidays, and I have come to pass them with my family at this place, of which Samuel Wilberforce is the rector and the attraction. It is an assemblage of houses which has ceased to be a village without becoming a town ; for to the old church and parsonage and their dependent cottages have been added military buildings, a railway station, and various groups of villas and sea-side circuses, in one of which we are. A walk of a mile or two along the shingles brings you to a *château* of Lord Ashburton's, a *plaisance* of J. W. Croker's, and a fantasia erected in rivalry of them by the jailor at Winchester. If you advance farther, it is to encounter old granges and modern farm-houses, over which has grown an incrustation of grey lichens, harmonising well enough with the sunless atmosphere of this season, the monotonous level of all the surrounding country, the grave aspect of the people, and even of the children, and the deliberate pace of all passers-by, rational or irrational. It is a part of England which seems to proclaim that this is no longer (if it ever was, except

in name) a 'merry' land. My lord's house turns its back insolently on the neighbouring cottages, and bids them keep their distance; and they crowd together, inhaling each other's evil fumes, like a sulky mob meditating mischief. But in the minds of all there is one bright spot. It is the parish church—frequented every day, and overflowing on Sundays—where, villagers though we be, we have four clergymen, all arrayed in snowy surplices, to divide the sacred office between them, and a band of choristers of the same virgin hue; with the whole ecclesiastical ceremonial executed with all attainable precision; and a rector[1] whose voice, countenance, style, and teaching are at once the most sedative and the best narcotic; and one curate, the very man whom Oxford delighteth to honour; and another, a Genevese, who has fled from the Arctic theology of his native city to the torrid or evangelical zone; and a third, a Mr. Trench,[2] the author of three volumes of poetry (which I have not seen), and of some most heartfelt and heart-stirring prose which I have heard from the pulpit. These good men wear the outward garb of that Oxonian *ism* which wants a more definite name than Dr. Pusey has given it, but under it glows—or seems to glow—a perfect galaxy of all clerical virtues: piety, meekness, charity, and a vehement intellectual activity, exerting itself with an energy increased by the limits which autho-

[1] Afterwards Bishop Wilberforce.
[2] Afterwards Archbishop Trench.

rity from without and reverence from within have prescribed to all their inquiries. I (who indeed have seen but very little) have seen nothing more indicative than this rural apostolate of the sound health which is yet to be found in some of the vital organs of our State ; and if I could believe that this same Alverstoke is a fair specimen of our Anglican Church system, I should dismiss all doubt of the silent and effectual, and ultimately victorious working of the healing principle over all our social diseases, inveterate and formidable as they are. But what have I to do away from Downing Street, and what right have I to touch any topics not colonial ? It is, I fear, very perverse, but as the shadows grow longer and longer with me, my delight abates, and my interest weakens, in the topics and in the pursuits to which my life has been chiefly devoted ; and I have no mind to write to you, or to cogitate myself about stipendiary magistrates, Caffres, or Sir Francis Head. My tall son is with us here, 'captain of a four-oar' on Portsmouth Harbour, and most amiably and cheerfully doing nothing else. My second boy is writing—as are 400 other Etonians—a miniature epic poem on the Persian War and Marathon ; and my two younger children are making collections of shells, and sea-plants, and such like ; my wife takes care of us all ; and I have by me for reading in leisure hours two Italian quartos on the life of the great Countess Matilda. But of all times, holidays are those in which I find the least opportunity for

spontaneous and self-composed exertion. And now, what are you doing? and where have you been? and where are you going? and what are you writing or meditating? and how fares your health? and when do you count on returning? Poor dear Edward Villiers! There is at this moment lying on the table at which I write a letter from a friend of mine and yours on the subject of a domestic loss which has half broken his heart. He, poor fellow, is unable to find even the comfort of believing that there is a hereafter, or that there is a God. To such perspicacity (if such it be) who would not prefer any form of consolatory superstition? Dear Villiers! I rejoice that he had hope in his death, and that the blest recollections he has bequeathed to her are full of peace. My wife has two sisters at Nice who often see her, and report but ill of her health. My brother-in-law, Mr. Dicey, and his wife and children are also probably there by this time. This morning I had a letter from Lord Monteagle—such a letter as men write when they are well and happy. God bless you, my dear Taylor.

Ever most truly yours,

JAMES STEPHEN.

From Henry Taylor to James Spedding.

Rome: February 26, 1844.

My dear Spedding,—Your unanswered letter has looked some gentle reproaches at me as often as I have turned it over in my box, and I have still kept

saying, 'Come, lie still there another day or two and we shall see;' but for some weeks the wind was contrary—that is, you must understand, the 'Neapolitan *tramontana*,' which is destruction to my nerves, and incapacitates me for everything, and is, indeed, the cruellest wind that blows. And after that Alice said to me, 'Henry, now you have got rid of this *tramontana*, you ought to remember that we have been married four and a half years, and you have never yet written a single stanza or verse in which you have made mention of my merits and charms, and could I ever have thought it of you?' So I was obliged to write verses for the next four or five weeks, and no sooner had I brought up my arrears of panegyric than Alice said, 'Here have we been staying at Naples almost two months, and you have never taken me to see anything—not Baiae, not Pompeii, not Vesuvius—and have kept me shut up in the midst of a thousand interesting objects, making my life wretched.' So I was obliged to bestir myself, and we went to all these places and some others, and this, with a little illness I had, filled up the last ten days at Naples, and a four days' journey brought us here the day before yesterday.

And what shall I tell you of Naples? It is said to have been the birthplace of Punch, and I certainly saw a great deal in the ways of the people which reminded me of him—their vehement gestures, their nasal twang (which is noticed by Shakespeare), and their love of noise for its own sake. This is the

difference, however, that with a world of gabbling and scuffling there are no blows struck ; they are good-humoured and cowardly. With their superiors, at least with us foreigners, they are both familiar and beggarly ; vociferously importunate ; liars and cheats, and eager in imposition, less for the sake of the money perhaps than for the sake of success at the game. You come out of the door of your hotel, five hack-cabmen get sight of you and drive at you like madmen ; you try to escape, but whichever way you turn one of them cuts across and intercepts you ; you get into one of the cabs as your only asylum ; you begin to make your bargain for your course ; and after getting out again and walking off to bring him to reason the price is settled ; your course is finished and you pay him ; then comes the look of indignation and surprise, staring first at the money in his hand, then at you ; you remind him that it is exactly the sum agreed upon, and if he cannot dispute this in some way or another, he then clamours for his *bottiglia*, or money to drink, as if it was a matter of course ; this being denied, he takes a tone of supplication, and after much importunity you give him half a carlino ; then again comes the look of surprise and then again the supplication ; you get really a little angry now, and when he affects to reject anything as small as a half carlino, you take it back again and walk off ; then he follows you into the court of your house, spreading his arms before you to oppose your entrance, and when you are inexorable (such was my

mood once) he will take your hand, and actually try to penetrate into your closed fist and screw out the money ; and all this is done in great good-humour, and apparently without any idea that *your* good-humour may fail you. Aubrey de Vere caught a boy trying to pick his pocket, shook his umbrella at him, and the boy ran back a few paces ; then he tried again, and then retired on being caught ; but the third time he succeeded. In another case that I heard of, the boy was pursued, and he stopped every now and then, when he had got start enough, to wave the pocket-handkerchief over his head in triumph. The spectators were none of them so ill-natured as to stop the thief. Such are Neapolitan manners—gay, lawless, good-humoured, and obliging ; the temperament of the people seems all-sufficient to them ; life itself the only necessary of life ; and labour superfluous. Some one said of them, that whereas other people rested when they were tired of work, they work only when they are tired of idleness. The middle and upper classes look graver than the lower, some of them as grave as Englishmen ; but they are said to be equally idle and as much devoted to amusement. I pelted the King with bonbons at the Carnival, and he pelted me ; and the pelting seemed to be carried on by the gentlemen and ladies with as much spirit as by the populace.

And now we have left Naples behind, with its noise and nonsense and all its charms of scenery ; and next comes Rome, of which I know nothing yet

beyond what one or two walks in St. Peter's and the Vatican could show me. As to the outside of St. Peter's, I declare that I should pass it by in any capital city, without supposing it to be any very remarkable building. The inside gives me the impression of extraordinary amplitude and of perfect proportions in vast dimensions; but still I find nothing in it that impresses me so deeply as the grandeur of the great Gothic cathedrals. It has to my eyes more of an aulic than of a religious character; call it the Palace of the Gods, and I should say that nothing could be more worthy of them. It is a common, and, I believe, a true remark that you are deceived by the perfection of the symmetry so as not to be easily aware of the stupendous size of St. Peter's. If this be so, is it not a fault? For what is the use of size, if the effect of it is not produced upon the mind? Without this, to enlarge the dimensions of a building beyond all ordinary measurements seems less a triumph of art than a triumph of pounds, shillings, and pence. I recollect your quoting from Bacon in reference to a picture of Titian's in Rogers's drawing-room the maxim that 'there is no excellent beauty without some strangeness in the proportion;' and I certainly find that the absolute symmetry of St. Peter's does not lay hold of the imagination like the Gothic irregularities of the cathedrals of Cologne, Strasburg, and Milan. But for the Vatican I can say more. The first impression is that you are in a town with statue galleries for streets; and I have

not yet got over the first impression, and, when I do, I anticipate no disappointment in the enjoyment of the details.

And when do you join us? Is it to be here, or at Florence, or at Venice? We are to stay here through March; then go to Florence for a week; then *I believe* to Venice, and through the Tyrol and down the Rhine. I am heartily glad that you are not in any commission but that which you had from nature to live and do well. By all means keep your liberty if you can afford it. Would that I had mine, with half my salary to pay my way! With health and leisure I feel persuaded that though I might be indolent I should not be idle; and I think that in some respects our temperaments are alike. Do you ever write for the 'Edinburgh' now? Or are you altogether engrossed by the *magnum opus*? I have been writing two or three minor poems. I will enclose one which I wrote since I began this letter yesterday, as it may be personally offensive. Alice sends you her love.

Ever yours,

H. Taylor.

Remember us to Mr. Rogers. Alice dreamt of him last night. Do you hear anything of Aubrey's volume? What do you say to it?

From Henry Taylor to Aubrey de Vere.

Colonial Office : December 24, 1844.

The examination of Southey's papers is exceedingly interesting, and gives one a notion of what it was that went to make the most learned man of his time. I have opened only one of the boxes (out of seven), and that a small one, but wonderful are the contents. Amongst other things twenty-two notebooks crammed with all sorts of extracts from all manner of books, written out in his small hand, each notebook being what would make a large volume if printed. Then come six volumes containing journals of his various travels and tours. Then miscellaneous packets of materials and unprinted portions of divers projected works. Then copies of sundry letters of his own, with the originals of those to which they replied. Amongst these is his correspondence with Shelley.

If I were a man of 20,000*l.* a year I would print the notebooks just as they are. They would make a collection of about the size of Bayle's Dictionary perhaps, and of far greater value. It is possible that this might be done without a man of 20,000*l.* a year to do it, and I must see about it.

You tell me to do as little as possible for the Colonial Office ; but the sort of thing to be done is very often what one cannot comfortably put aside. I was beginning to think I saw the light through a mass of business the other day, when I received a

reference of the cases of ninety prisoners in the gaol of Dominica under severe sentences (five of them sentences of death) for crimes committed in the late revolt there, and I was desired to state what ought to be done with them. I was enabled with a good conscience to advise that the decision of the cases should not be in my hands ; but you will see that, with every desire to give poetry the first claim, I cannot, as long as I am in this office, put aside for its sake what has a claim of a more tangible and personal character.

From Aubrey de Vere to Henry Taylor.

Ambleside : Sunday, March 9, 1845.

I can hardly tell you the interest with which I listen to Miss Fenwick's conversation, even when you have no share in it. What a noble being she is! In conversing with her, as in intercourse with Wordsworth, I am perpetually reminded of the perpetual youth that belongs to true excellence. He speaks still with as fresh an enthusiasm on all the subjects which present themselves to his moral or poetic sympathies as he would have felt when he first came to these mountains; and her heart is not a day older than when she first made acquaintance with that somewhat wayward boy whose haunt was in the old square tower or on the banks of the melodious recluse in Durham. Such an age is an addition to youth, not a substitute for it. I have seen her face kindle with animation such as she may have felt at twenty.

Wordsworth was reading poetry at the moment, and I felt inclined to fancy that it might have been to her that he had written those lines, 'How rich that forehead's broad expanse.' Do you know them? You have indeed been fortunate in friends. You say that she has done much for you, and I believe you. No one can have loved another so long and so profoundly without doing something for him. If I were really as accessible to good as you think me and as I seem, the days I have passed here would not be thrown away upon me; as it is, they will be long remembered with deep interest and affection. The Old Man of the Mountains[1] is as strong as ever in body and in soul. I have seen a great deal of him, and listened to more wisdom than could be extracted from all the conversation going on in London for a week together. We have toiled up the mountain sides, and he has murmured like a young pine-grove for hours together, and not been the least tired. It is one of the wonders of the world to hear him talk over his own poetry and give you its secret history. I verily believe that not an object he ever saw or sound he ever heard has been lost upon him. He himself says in his last volume that the Muses are the children of 'Mnemosyne' (Memory) as well as of Jupiter, and certainly his Muse takes wonderfully after her mother. Between him and you I am beginning to know the value of Fact and Nature as well as the interests and faculties which connect us with these; but this ought

[1] Wordsworth.

to be the *foundation* of our knowledge. There is something very interesting in Miss Fenwick's friendship for Wordsworth. I believe I am tending towards your opinion that a woman is better than a man. What a man he is, and yet hers is a higher moral nature!

I have made acquaintance with Hartley Coleridge, whom I was anxious to know. It was a strange feeling to look at him and see his father in him. He is not one of the smooth plausibilities of modern society. He says he has got no end of MS. ready. He wanted to repeat a sonnet of his own and could not, so I repeated it, and he was greatly pleased. If I were staying here I would wish to see a great deal of him.

From Henry Taylor to ——.[1]

[July, 1845.]

I read the article through and saw no mutilation. I mentioned to James Marshall some months ago your conclusion against the morality of the manufacturing population as compared with the agricultural, deduced from the statistics of crime, and he made what I thought a very profound remark on the subject. He said that human nature was in a more active and excited state in the manufacturing population, and that there was therefore a greater energy of the principle of evil, and of this the returns of crime gave the measure; but for the same reason there

[1] The address is lost, and the correspondent unknown.

was a greater energy of the principle of good, and of this there was no measure given, and which way the balance might be there was nothing to show.

He said that judging from his own experience and knowledge of the operatives, he thought they were composed of much better and much worse men than the rustics, and that the balance of morality was in their favour though the balance of detected crime was against them.

From Henry Taylor to his Father.

November 3, 1845.

A friend of mine repeated to me the other day a conversation he had had with the Duke of Wellington about the surmises of invasion by the French. He asked if the Duke thought it possible, to which the Duke answered that he did not know what was possible ; they had it in their heads ; and he observed that the French would always have an advantage over us in that matter, because they could see twice as far across the Channel as we could (having the sun in their backs, I suppose). He said that steam was available for offensive warfare and not for defensive, but that a steam-boat would be a very vulnerable vessel ; a shot in the paddle-box was enough, and though they talked of the screw and of having the machinery under water, yet there was one part that they could not put under water, and that was the chimney.

From Henry Taylor to his Father.

Downing Street : November 20, 1845.

Now, as to your remarks on the irregular and distant rhymes of my two last poems, Alice is disposed to agree with you, and that I reckon to be more of a corroboration than you would suppose, for, though she is so small a matter of a woman, I account her to be a great critic in poetry. Nevertheless I think you are both wrong. My rhymes, though *reiterated* at a distance, almost always recur *also* at short intervals, for they are multiplex rhymes, and my notion is that by being thus repeated again and again, both near and far, they interlace each section within itself into more of a composite wholeness. This effect may not always be felt *at first*, and *at first* the objections of surprise, and a strained watchfulness on the part of the reader, may be just. But I think that all good poetry should be constructed with a view to the effects which take place when the reader becomes familiar with the piece. If you had not become familiar with 'Lycidas' (to which you refer me), I rather think that you would find the same fault with that; for the irregularity and distance of rhymes is hardly less there, I think, and there are there several lines (three or four, I believe, in the first section) which have no rhymes at all—an irregularity in which I have not indulged.

From Henry Taylor to his Wife.

Bay House, Gosport : December 22, 1845.

. . . They have all been very lively and pleasant, Carlyle delightfully so, and Lord Grey full of vivacity and cordiality. Lady Harriet very happy and gay.

I am very much interested in getting some close and continuous insight into Carlyle's mind ; but, look into it how I may, I cannot make a consistent whole of it. He is constantly complaining of this man and that for not being able to take any clear and coherent view of the nature of things, and I cannot help thinking that he is himself vexed and harassed by the same inability, so as to have acquired a sort of personal dislike to the minds which give him a reflection of the dark side of his own. I cannot find that any harmonising view or principle pervades his opinions ; and though I think I have as much of a turn for reconciling discordant opinions as most men, yet I cannot get at any scope or circumference wide enough to comprehend his in one scheme. His light comes all in flashes, and

> Before a man hath time to say ' Behold ! '
> The jaws of darkness do devour it up.

I suppose it will generally be found that when a man quarrels with all the world for not giving an intelligible account of the ways of Providence, it is because he is much perplexed at them himself.

His wife is quiet, easy, and social.

. . . Carlyle is in great force, full of fire and fury

against everything that is in existence in the present age. He is very interesting as a specimen of a peculiar kind of character, standing out as a contrast as well as an antagonist to his day and generation, and very admirable as possessing a peculiar kind of genius, but, with all his fire and force, not conveying (I think) any portion of his sentiments into my mind, nor, indeed, any very distinct impression of what he would be at. He is full of renunciations, denunciations, disavowals, and contempt of everything that is current in the opinions and proceedings of mankind, but it is difficult to understand what he would wish to substitute. I lift up my voice against his intolerance sometimes, but it is never offensive to me in the same way that any other man's would be.

From James Spedding to Henry Taylor.

Morehouse : April 5, 1846.

My dear Taylor,—My suggestion about the change of scene in 'As You Like It' was thrown out on the sudden, merely as an illustration of the agreeable effect of variety, though it be only in the scene and landscape. I had not considered whether that play was a good example of the effect of variety generally, or in what manner the variety was chiefly produced. I only meant to observe that change of scene in that instance contributed greatly to the cheerfulness of the piece; and therefore should be borne in mind

as one of many devices by which monotony may be dispelled.

Now that I think of it, indeed, I should say that 'As You Like It' is one of the best instances I know of the happy effect of what I mean by variety. Call up the scenes as they succeed each other, and see what a gay succession they present of moving pictures; how various, yet how naturally blending (for you are to remember that it is not strong effects of *contrast* that I want, but only change of motion and freshness); and this is owing in great measure (if you observe it) to that simple change of scene. For though the change is but one, and though there is, as you say, but little alteration afterwards, yet it is in fact pregnant with a world of varieties; for when we are once in the forest everything that comes is new to everybody: every shift from one glade to another opens a new landscape and a new variety of life. And as everything is strange, so everything is transitory, which keeps the interest as fresh as can be. As for the lion and the snake (setting aside natural history), I should agree with you that so violent an adventure was out of keeping, if it had been presented in such a manner as to create alarm or terror. But, as we do not hear of the danger till it is over, the description serves only (with me at least) to give a more lively impression of the general wildness and savagery of the forest.

But the criticism which I promised you was about another principle in dramatic composition, which is

more important. The action which forms the subject of the drama ought, I think, to be opened as well as shut within the circle of the drama. The business of the play is to exhibit some purpose, passion, or accident, working upon the character or fortunes of the hero. Now I think we ought to see it *begin* to work; therefore we ought to be introduced to the hero *before* it begins. This is in Shakespeare, I think, an invariable rule. Certainly, in all his best plays (of which there are at least a dozen), the hero, when we first meet him, knows nothing of the passion in which he is about to be involved, and the working of which is to form the business of the play. Macbeth has not dreamed of the crown; Othello would wager his life upon Desdemona's faith, 'for she had eyes and chose him'; Hamlet has received no commission to revenge his father's murder; Rosalind and Orlando have never seen each other; Romeo has not seen Juliet, and is in love with a woman as unlike her as possible; Claudio has only 'looked on Hero with a soldier's eye, that liked, but had a rougher task in hand than to drive liking to the name of love'; Benedict has never doubted that he shall die a bachelor; Helena, though in love with Bertram, has never thought of aspiring to marry him; Olivia thinks she shall never have room in her heart for any passion but grief for her brother's death; Viola has heard her father name the Duke, but has not seen him; Lear has had so little experience of filial unkindness that he mistakes Cordelia's veracity

for it; Leontes nor Posthumus has ever doubted the virtue of his wife; Angelo has never cared about a woman; Miranda has never seen a man; and who would have ventured to tell Coriolanus that within a few weeks he would be in arms against Rome? And so on, I dare say, through the whole list.

Now, if I understood your sketch of your plot[1] rightly, Silisco's feelings towards Gertruda are not meant to suffer any material change, nor (in spite of her marriage) Gertruda's towards him. I assume, therefore, that the passion which is to be the subject of your play has already commenced. And my objection is that I find it already at work and in full career. I feel as if I had come too late and missed the first scene. Silisco, Gertruda, Ruggiero, Fiordeliza, are already engaged in the affection with which they are to be exercised; and I hardly see how you can make them understand either themselves or each other better at the end than they do at the beginning. Of course I speak as a man who has seen only the first act, and does not know what resources you have in store; but I think you would at once extend the interest and condense the action of your story if you would introduce us to Silisco as he was *before* that water excursion. I know it was the beginning of a new life to him; he says so himself; I want to see it begin, and to know what difference it makes. The new life should be seen growing out of the old; and the reckless magnificence of the man will show

[1] The plot of *The Virgin Widow; or, A Sicilian Summer.*

to greater advantage in the old than in the new. No matter how short the scene, the merest glimpse of him will do. I should like, too, to know the effect of the first emotion upon Gertruda; but I will not ask for too much at once. Take the general suggestion into consideration and let it bear what fruit it will.

Ever yours,
JAMES SPEDDING.

While I am about it, I send you a copy of a letter about the division of the acts in 'Much Ado.' It has a general connection with the subject of dramatic development. But you must let me have it again.

From Charles Greville to Henry Taylor.

The Grange: Thursday.[1]

Your letter has given me the deepest concern. I shall be in town to-morrow, and be glad to talk over with you the subject of the retirement. I have a feeling that Stephen[2] will never make the exertions for himself that may be necessary, and, if so, it is all the more incumbent on his friends to bestir themselves, and to take care (so far as in them lies) that justice is done to him. I am willing to believe that those who are in power are sufficiently impressed with the greatness of his merits, and of the claims which he has upon the country, to render him both justice and honour; but my experience of life forbids me to be

[1] 1847?—*H. T.* [2] Sir James Stephen.

too confident on this head. There hardly ever was such a case as this: here is a man with stupendous powers of mind and great acquirements, who has devoted himself to the public service; in a manner the most modest and conscientious consenting to occupy a subordinate situation; casting aside all personal ambition; indifferent to that public admiration and applause which are so dear to most men; and satisfying himself with the approbation of his own conscience, and the regard and esteem of the few who are really acquainted with his great qualities and powers. It would be monstrous if he were to be quietly placed on the shelf, with nothing more than the coldly calculated superannuation of a servant from whom no more good service is to be got. I expect to be in town about one to-morrow, but as soon as I get to Downing Street I will send over to you, and we will discuss the subject, in which you may be sure I feel the deepest interest.

Ever yours,

C. G.

From Sir James Stephen to Henry Taylor.

Bude, Cornwall: July 18, 1847.

My dear Taylor,—It is among my infirmities to be utterly unable to send away a letter unless it be despatched and written at the same time. A critical note on your Essays[1] was written by me two or three weeks

[1] Two of the essays published in *Notes from Life*.

ago, but, being unluckily kept by me, it passed under the influence of this morbid feeling. As, at this moment, I have very little time for writing (for it is candle-light, and I need the light of day to make much progress with my own pen), I shall abridge what I formerly said, and put it up for you at once.

I have but two or three criticisms of any moment to offer on particular papers. The style is, I think, in general, exceedingly correct, and I see hardly anything to find fault with in the way of detail. N.B. The Essay on money, or rather on the expenditure of money, is, *me judice*, by far the weightier and the more original of the two.

But my judgment, so far as it is an unfavourable one, goes against what is (I suppose) fundamental, and is, therefore, to no useful purpose. I think, however, that these Essays ought to be in verse; moral essays, in imitation of the Dryden metre. Or if not in verse, they ought to be in apothegmatic prose, after the fashion of Bacon.

Truth, however ponderous, admonition, however just, needs the titillation of rhyme or the pungency of epigram to force its way in the world; unless it be Divine truth, or admonition founded on it, when it finds acceptance from other motives than the mere love of reading. You may say that I am only ascribing to others a perverted taste of my own. If you say so, I think you will say wrong. In my youth I read some little (very little indeed) of Plato,

some of Cicero, a great deal of Montaigne, a host of English and French essayists on the economy of human life ; and I can think of no such writer who has *lived* by the mere force of clear, strong, sound sense. King Solomon did not trust to it without the aid of parallelism and proverb. The world has not grown more docile since his days.

I think that, with the aid of rhyme, you might bring out finely the energy and sagacity of many remarks which, wrapt up as they now are, in a plain drab and Quaker-like suit, will not (I fear) strike the mental ear acutely enough to make it tingle. With the aid of the Baconian style that effect would be produced far more completely. But to aim at such a style is so arduous that I scarcely venture to suggest it. Besides (as you often say), a man must write his own style (whatever that may be), or he must write affectedly, crabbedly, and to no purpose. You have, both in prose and verse, a power over the instrument you play upon, which always excites my admiration, and sometimes my envy. But your prose style is of the two kinds, expository or colloquial, not (I think) didactic. In these essays there is no evolution of facts or of principles, no easy talk, but precept chiefly ; and for precept your prose is not, as it seems to me, constructed. Your verse, on the other hand, is often preceptive, or hortatory, with the utmost advantage. If you will translate what you have written into heroic rhymes, I doubt not of its success. If you publish it as it

stands, I do doubt it ; I predict its failure from the absence of those condiments with which mankind likes to have good advice seasoned.

I have again and again thought the matter over and always with the same result.

We have been moving slowly along the south coasts of Devonshire and Dorsetshire, and, having crossed Dartmoor to the north of Cornwall, are now turning our faces homewards, with a similar slow advance, along the northern coasts of Cornwall and Devonshire. We trust that in your household, father, mother, son, and daughter are all thriving, and well and happy.

Ever yours,
JAMES STEPHEN.

From Aubrey de Vere to Henry Taylor.

July, 1847.

Will you have an incident of our election? A Roman Catholic priest, fiercely baited by the mob because he called O'Connell a tyrant and was himself a Young Irelander, had refused all protection from police and military, saying it was better to be torn to pieces than to live on such conditions. As he walked home alone, the crowd divided, like the Red Sea as the prophet passed, but roared at him like the sea on our western coasts. As the waves seemed just ready to topple down on his head he stopped, turned to them and said, 'Slaves you were, slaves you are, and

slaves you will be to the third and fourth generation of the children who come after you.'

They were so much astonished that they let him pass.

Please to remember that that is an anecdote in favour of Mr. Kenyon, and not against the Irish people, and so turn it to no bad use.

July, 1847.

We had many amusing incidents during the election, at which you would have laughed. Anster, the translator, and far the best translator, of 'Faust,' came to record his vote in our favour, and his poetical abstraction, mixed occasionally with a whimsical amusement in the midst of the whirl around us, used to entertain me much. On one occasion the High Sheriff, himself a Repealer, who had been most sharply accused of overawing the city with military, and assailed both with hard words and harder missiles of another sort, was trying vehemently to obtain a hearing in his own defence. There he stood girt about with police, vociferating and gesticulating furiously, but almost inaudible in the tumult around him. At this moment Anster, who had been for some time in deep reverie, or occasionally engaged in writing doggrel verses or drawing caricatures on the back of a letter, looked up with a mock expression of solemnity on his features and commented on the scene in the lines,

I am a blessed Glendoveer,
'Tis mine to speak and yours to hear,
But what the devil brings me here?

Never did I see less blessedness than on the High Sheriff's face. Anster is a most original man, and shows his originality in one way which I do not approve of. He is the only man of genius I ever met who did not like your poetry. 'Artevelde' and 'Edwin' alike he refuses to read. However, finding your little volume of minor poems here, he took it up and read two or three of them. He then put the book down and said in a very gruff voice, like a man ill-used, 'Those are apparently very fine poems. I see that if I am betrayed into reading them at all I shall have to read them several times over.' By the way, if you choose to turn to page 40 of the last volume of Mrs. H. Coleridge's new edition of the 'Biographia Literaria,' you will find the highest, as well as the most discriminating, compliment that has been yet paid to you. She speaks of you as having accepted and worthily replied to a certain poetical challenge thrown out by her father many years ago. The passage on which she comments in S. T. C. is one which has often excited my attention. At page 432 she quotes from my poem to her father. The whole of the new edition is a wonderful monument of learning for a woman, and does her infinite credit.

From Henry Taylor to Miss Fenwick.

London: July, 1847.

Aubrey de Vere has just come to town to give evidence before a Parliamentary Committee on Colonisation. He has gone through strange adventures, and has become a most active man of business and a most efficient mob orator. In one instance the troops came to attack a mob of several thousands,[1] and, finding that they were in Aubrey's hands, who had stopped them and was making them a speech from the top of a wall, the officer in command very wisely took away the troops, and Aubrey brought them to reason, and persuaded them to give up their enterprise and disperse. He looks very thin, but not unwell, and is and has been in good health and spirits. His spirits have never failed him, and he says that if he were not to take things lightly it would be impossible to do what is to be done in Ireland at this time. In his neighbourhood they are spared the horrors of any absolutely mortal amount of famine, but they have much riot and disorder to resist. One parley he had to hold with eight muskets and pistols pointed at him, not, he says, with any desire to shoot him, but in order to prevent his advancing so near to the parties as to be able to identify them. It was not safe to advance, therefore, and at the same time he felt that it was more dangerous to retire, for a bold front is the first

[1] In Ireland.

requisite for safety with such people. His invariable self-possession is an invaluable quality in such circumstances as he has been placed in; and he understands the people thoroughly, and has almost always succeeded either in obtaining their confidence in himself or destroying their confidence in their leaders. The people who pointed their guns at him ended by professing great respect for him and his family, but a determination to kill the steward, which was what they had come about, Aubrey having given them a point-blank refusal of their demand for his dismissal. He is going to the Bingham Barings' to-morrow to meet Lord Grey and the Chancellor of the Exchequer and talk Irish to them.

And now how are you, and what are your plans?

From Aubrey de Vere to Hon. Mrs. H. Taylor.

Mount Trenchard: October 5, 1847.

I am greatly mistaken if this new comedy[1] does not prove as satisfactory to me as any of the tragedies. A poetic comedy, rich in character, abounding in beauty, and musical with *such* laughter as Homer attributed to Aphrodite—this is the rarest of all things. However, a great deal depends on Gertruda, Fiordeliza, and the bay. The women especially must be not only very attractive but hyper-womanly beings. A comedy is itself a sort of womanly thing, round and rolling on into people's hearts, dimpled all

[1] *The Virgin Widow.*

over, having a sort of graceful impudence about it, and yet not without a sort of morality of its own.

Stephen has written some letters to my uncle about the state of the monied men, which fills one (so to speak) with the greatest alarm and commiseration. I suppose nothing can prevent my suffering still more, except that I do not know personally those individuals who are successively going down like trees in a forest, when the east wind, which has already blown the Black Sea into white foam, takes up its abode in some pine temple of the West and sings canticles in its own praise. If rich English merchants can be so easily upset—if the golden tide of British prosperity can thus easily settle above their heads with but a momentary disturbance and one surviving bubble that embodies 'the last strong cry of some great swimmer in his agony,' it is to be supposed that that devoted race, the Irish landlords, 'earth bubbles' to be broken by the breath of the times, will in a night or two more vanish and leave no more to be seen at the cock-crow of the new era than a few fairy rings on the grass. And yet, after all, I have a notion that they are destined to stand. Landlords are lords of land, whereas they that sweep the seas with ships are but lords of water and lords of air. It takes many a tug to extract our roots of bitterness out of the stubborn soil. We are demons that do not issue forth from our victims without rending them. The land must foam at the mouth long before it casts us forth. It may cut itself all over with flinty

Roebucks and Halls, it may strip itself of the last tatters of sense and dwell in the tombs of past greatness, but still the evil spirit haunts it; a relation still exists between the land and the landlord. I hope you admire my humility in calling our own order demons. But then demons they *must* be, since every English newspaper calls them so. Perhaps you want to know why I count myself of their number, seeing I happen to have no land. Because I look on them as ill-used, and my sympathies always go over to the weaker party. Ruined, however, I think, notwithstanding both their own anticipations and those of their enemies, they will not be; on the contrary, I have all along maintained that in a few years their properties will be worth far more than they have been, and that the great majority of the proprietors will stick on and keep the saddle. The struggle will not last long enough to ruin them. The danger is for the poor, whom it will be hard to keep alive, *in this country*, unless the soil can be induced to make a large advance on the credit of future crops due, or the people to give the largest possible amount of labour at the lowest rate of repayment, so as to enable pauper farmers to employ them, and increase the produce of the land without utterly repudiating all vulgar considerations of rates and rents, taxes, and the support of their children. However, the poor people are improving certainly. A watchman armed with gun and bayonet walks up and down before the pier at Foynes every night, I suppose to

prevent the tide from rushing in and flooding the basin opened in the day. The other night a single countryman very pleasantly knocked him down with a stone, and was very near taking away his gun. This setting a single man against a single man marks a great advance in morality.

From Sir James Stephen to Henry Taylor.

Paris: November 21, 1847.

We went on Friday last to a kind of evening levée at the Foreign Office here, where M. Guizot attacked me as a mere pretender to a place on the sick list, and said that he could see through the whole affair, and that I had hoisted the yellow flag in order to obtain an opportunity for visiting Italy. However, he was exceedingly and elaborately courteous, probably because I was the only Englishman present, except Lord Holland and Lord Normanby, who was there on duty. Guizot looks unlike the man he was in England. His demeanour expresses the consciousness of great authority and high place. It is that of a man secure of homage, and not condescending to court or to requite it. It is pleasant now and then to see the workings of conscious dignity, even though at the expense of the observances of society as it exists among equals. He has a touch of the *brusquerie* of Napoleon. The only other considerable person we have seen is M. Monod, the great Protestant preacher. He obtained from us more

admiration than sympathy. It was impossible to deny to many passages of his sermon the praise of fervent eloquence. But upon such topics as he handled (and they were among the most sacred on which it is possible to touch), a passion, however genuine, which is not uttered in tones, gestures, and forms of speech associated in the mind of the hearer with true and deep emotion, chills when it ought to warm. If we had been French, I doubt not we should have been much moved. Being English, we could only greatly wonder.

From Sarah Austin to Henry Taylor.

7 Rue Lavoisier, Paris : December 20, 1847.

Dear Mr. Taylor,—I received the little book you were so good as to send me an hour ago, and I cannot wait till another day to thank you. You 'gentlemen of England who live at home' have not the faintest conception of what the pains and pleasures of the expatriated are : the pains—let me speak for myself—are those of a daily hunger and thirst never appeased ; the pleasures, such as that I now owe to you, I don't know if you will think them the less profound that they are generally more apt to draw tears than smiles from me. Certainly, of all people, I have the least reason to complain of being treated as an alien anywhere ; but, the newer things are, the less root they have in the heart, and I often long for trifling things and uninteresting people that belong

to former days. What, then, must I feel towards those not only long known, but long admired, respected, loved ?

I have already read enough of your book to see the same earnest and elevated spirit that so deeply impressed me in 'Artevelde'—views of life entirely in accordance with my own expressed as I cannot express them. To estimate the full extent of the mischief done by

> The laws
> That cherish *these* in multitudes, and cause
> The passions that aforetime lived and died
> In palaces to flourish far and wide
> Throughout a land,

you must come here, nay, live here, where every eminence is open to every ambition, and nothing in the way of rise is impossible, hardly improbable. So much of desperate gloom and burning disappointment I never saw as among the young men of France. The idea of an appointed way in which each is to tread—and, therefore, to tread with a firm and willing step—oh, how far is it from their souls ! The majestic figure of Duty, in all her severe beauty, seems to have no place in their hearts. What is to come of this fierce strife with destiny, with the immutable laws of the world ? You at home are not without the disease, but you have not yet *le délire de l'égalité*, which makes every superiority a grievance and a crime. Only yesterday I was reading in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes' (in an article on Mr. Browning) two passages from your admirable pre-

face. Well as I knew them, they had in their French dress a fresh charm of truth. Byron and Shelley have done much more harm here and in Germany than in England. Byron's ravings against his own country arose from the consciousness of the resistance she would oppose to the sort of evil that he cultivated and celebrated. His instinct was right : this resistance is much less on the Continent. Unlike as the French and Germans are, they unite in the worship of him, and of other false gods.

I am extremely touched and delighted at the tribute to Edward Villiers. You know my affectionate admiration for him, and how entirely my judgment and my heart held him distinct from all around him. He and his wife seemed equally strange to the world they belonged to.

Lucy tells me most agreeable and satisfying things of your dear wife and child and country home. I hear it all with heartfelt pleasure, and pray God to continue to you these best blessings, and the mind to accept them *as the best*. The separation from my children is a wound that will never heal, but it can and must be borne.

Thank you again for recollecting me, dear Mr. Taylor, and be assured of my constant and sincere regard.

S. Austin.

From Henry Taylor to his Father.

March 6, 1848.

The Duc de Montebello, who is staying with the Charterises, was Louis Philippe's Minister of Marine. Frank Charteris tells me the story which *he* tells *him*. He says that their Cabinet was not surprised; that they knew long before that a procession to the Tuileries with a demand for Louis Philippe's abdication was to have followed the reform banquet had it been allowed to take place, and that their only choice was to attempt the suppression of the banquet itself or to meet the subsequent attack. So says he; but I hear a different story from authority equally good as regards means of information, and (as I understand) more trustworthy. The Duc de Coigny saw Louis Philippe on the Monday preceding *the* Thursday, and he (the King) spoke of the whole affair as a thing to be put down with a stroke of the pen, and seemed in high spirits. As to the result, the Provisional Government seem to be well meaning, but wildly ignorant; and the result, I suppose, will be a civil war between the National Guard and the populace. What will come out of that, who can say? Most probably something which it will be better for Europe to witness than for France to feel.

March 21.

On Saturday afternoon I met the Prussian Minister in the streets, and he said the movement now abroad was the best for Germany since that of Charlemagne,

and this evening the report is that the King of Prussia has abdicated. Such is the mutability of affairs at present, and so little can the most able politicians (for few surpass Bunsen in ability) see before them! Whether kings keep their crowns or lose them I cannot bring myself to care; but I should care a great deal to hear that your eyes were stronger, and I wish the weather would give them fair play.

I met Cobden at dinner last week. He seemed rather a small man to make a great noise.

Mortlake: March 27.

A friend of mine, who has been for some years in habits of communication with Louis Philippe, tells me that he is very cheerful, and especially gratified at the discomfiture of Thiers. He told my friend that Thiers said to him the day of the Revolution, 'Je suis tout à fait *débanqué*' (French slang, which, in English slang, we should translate *done*), and that he (Louis Philippe) replied, 'Je vous ai toujours dit que vous le seriez.' And this seemed to be his consolation in his adversity. The Queen, however, was not so to be consoled. She said that for the King and her it did not signify, but for the young people (whom she seemed to think more hopeful than the world reports them to be) the prospect was deplorable.

In these times it is rather a relief to get away from the news into the gossip, so I have given you these scraps.

From Aubrey de Vere to Hon. Mrs. Henry Taylor.

Curragh Chase : April 2, 1848.

My sympathies go very much with Guizot, who seems to me one of the few Frenchmen recently before the world who has no resemblance to a schoolboy. A schoolmaster he is said to resemble, however, which may, perhaps, account for the degree of hatred heaped upon him by that unruly set of mischievous blockheads who have lately made their sublime 'barring out' at Paris, and will not be quiet, I suppose, till they have burned the city to the ground. Pray do you, in the middle of your happy home (your garden must be now beginning to suck warmth and brightness out of the air and ground, and prepare innumerable toys for my godson to play with), ever send your thoughts over the large adjoining common called Europe? Every day it is becoming more and more a common, for every day new fences are uprooted. Every crazy neophyte in the new doctrine of deliverance is boasting 'that with the help of the Lord' he 'has leaped a wall' of ancient prejudice, and very soon, I suppose, the wild asses will be able to quench their thirst at every spring. You must not think that I am all full of bitterness on the subject, however; my sympathies go strongly with *national* deliverances, though not with democratic insurrections. I pant to see Poland a nation again. I cannot help sympathising with Lombardy. I ardently wish for a great Italian con-

federation of free states (if they can manage their freedom)—at all events, of independent states—and the more Germany can realise a nationality the better pleased I shall be. There, too, if anywhere, the people may be grave enough, honest enough, industrious enough, and stupid enough for popular institutions ; but still I am dreadfully cross at the way that all these experiments are inaugurated.

That a mob should dictate to an Emperor of Austria, or even a King of Prussia, is disgusting ; I think they would have done better to have fought the matter out, and subdued the madness of the people thoroughly before they began to give their reforms. Perhaps they could not ; but, if so, neither can they stand still where they now are. When once the lower classes have felt their physical power, they are like dogs that have once tasted sheep's blood. If the reforms now made had been made gradually and voluntarily, I should have exulted in great hope ; as it is, the thing is a mess, and will probably 'end in a riot,' as a mail coachman said to Alfred Tennyson ten years ago, when speaking of the invasion made by railroads upon the just prerogatives of coach-drivers. Tennyson is very indignant at the events in France, and cries in fury, 'Let us not see a French soldier land on the English shore, or I will tear him limb from limb'—a very wholesome feeling. 'You are quite a Conservative,' I said to him one day. He replied, 'I believe in progress and would *conserve the hopes of man*' ; a very good definition of rational

Conservatism, as it struck me. He is now gone to the island of Valentia to inhale Atlantic breezes and listen to the 'divine sea.'

From Henry Taylor to his Wife.

The Grange: September 19, 1848.

. . . The rest of the party are young people, except the Carlyles, who have a sort of home here for weeks together. Carlyle seems in better health than usual and talks away lustily, and there is always something to take one's attention in his talk, and often a sort of charm in it; but less instructive talk I never listened to from any man who had read and attempted to think. His opinions are the most groundless and senseless opinions that it is possible to utter; or rather they are not opinions, for he will utter the most opposite and contradictory and incompatible opinions in the most dogmatic and violent language in the course of half an hour. The real truth is that they are not opinions, but 'shams.' And I think it is the great desire to have opinions and the incapacity to form them which keeps his mind in a constant struggle and gives it over to every kind of extravagance. It is wonderful that a man of no opinions should exercise such an influence in the world as he appears to do; but I suppose it is an influence of concussion and subversion rather than any other. That is not the sort of influence which the world seems to want at present.

There is a great deal of rowing on the lake and riding on the downs, with runnings away and tumblings off, when the ladies ride. Charles Buller is pleasant and witty ; Carlyle talks more bright and forcible nonsense than man ever did before ; Aubrey de Vere distributes himself equally, is easy, and appears to advantage, showing the desire to please without the care to conciliate, and showing most of it, I think, when he is addressing himself to Mrs. Carlyle. With Carlyle, I hear that he had a passage of arms yesterday on theological grounds, and they say that Carlyle was furiously and extravagantly irreverent. Aubrey no doubt would be calm and strong, and Carlyle, I suppose, had repented afterwards, for at dinner he took an opportunity of observing that he was 'bound to say Mr. de Vere had talked a great deal of excellent sense that day.'

Lady —— is the only person of the party in whom I find anything unpleasant. She seems a hard old woman, who strives to be full of youthful vivacity and to play a prominent part in society, and I do not perceive that she is either clever or cultivated. It is very difficult for me to answer that sort of person's demands for attention. Aubrey does it with all patience and complacency.

You saw —— in London, I think, and took a fancy against him. I know not why you should ; he is light, well-bred, and kindly, and there is a unity in him ; everything he says is like himself, neat, clean, and small ; and he is happy and intelligent. If the

lawn was spangled with such persons they would never be in my way.

I still intend to return on Saturday, but had you been here I should have liked six weeks of it exceedingly.

From Henry Taylor to his Wife.

Witton Hall, Witton-le-Wear, Darlington :
Whit Sunday, 1850.

Yesterday was a mild, grey, serene morning—not 'the bridal of the earth and sky,' more like the earth's widowhood consoled, and I went for the first time to the Lynnburn, and I found it had more to say to me than I had anticipated. The foliage was more backward than the flowers ; some trees were as bare as winter still, and the green was everywhere thin, though fresh. The flowers were thick, the lateness of the season perhaps delaying some departures as well as some arrivals. There was 'the violet and the rathe-primrose' in great abundance (the dog-violet that is, for the sweet ones have passed away), and there were orcus, anemone, wood-sorrel, wild hyacinth, lady's-smock, pilewort, and wild strawberry, 'with many more too long.' I looked for the mountain ash, whose berries twenty years ago,

> Arching the torrent's foam and flash
> Waved gladly into sight,

and it was not to be seen ; either it is gone, or I am stupid enough not to be able to distinguish it without

its leaves. I walked through the wood up the stream on the right bank, and then through the other wood to the Castle, the walk I used to take every evening seven-and-twenty years ago; and the past came back upon me with all its dreams, and I had to turn away my thoughts to you for consolation, you dear little reality.

Thirty years ago the old people were the only people who read what I wrote. Dear Alice, when I began 'Isaac Comnenus' in the little turret-chamber overhead, it did not occur to me that you would like it so much when you should come to woman's estate. I used to take a little telescope and look out of the turret-window at the girls of the farmhouse opposite the west gate—Cuddy Snaith's girls—and one day I saw the arrival of a brother who had been from home, and I saw one of the girls run out and rush into his arms with a glowing and beaming face before he reached the door. There was no sister for me, nor any girl to run or to rush. If I had had a telescope to look through twenty years I should have seen the face that was to be my fortune, and been content. But perhaps 'Isaac Comnenus' was not the worse for my having no girls' faces to look at but Cuddy Snaith's, and them not with the naked eye.

Grove Mill House, Watford: May 3, 1850.

I have passed the morning in writing to James Stephen, and reading about fifty of Burns's songs, to the merit of which I remain insensible. A happy

verse there may be here and there, and even a few good songs ; but I have read nothing to-day which seems worthy to live for twenty years. I have often in the course of my life taken up Burns to see if I would change my mind about him, but my mind won't be changed. He was a man of highly poetic temperament, and some other attributes of genius, but for one reason or another 99 per cent. of what he wrote was worthless, and I think nothing that he wrote was of such excellence as to found a poet's fame. Perhaps if he had written nothing but his best pieces I should think more highly of him, and with less liability to error ; but no man's best lies buried under more of worse, worser, and worsest.

From T. B. Macaulay to Henry Taylor.

Albany: June 6, 1850.

Dear Taylor,—I received the 'Virgin Widow' without being aware that the book which I was reading was a present from you. It contained no indication of your kindness, and I supposed that it had been sent me by the Longmans. I have since learned that they were only your agents. Many thanks for the pleasure which you have given me. Your drama is what you meant it to be—cheerful, graceful, and gentle. Nevertheless, 'Philip van Artevelde' is still, in my opinion, the best poem that the last thirty years have produced ; and I wish that you would

deprive it of that pre-eminence, a feat which nobody but yourself seems likely to accomplish.

I am a little sceptical as to the doctrines of your preface, and a little uneasy as to the effect which they may produce on yourself. Surely, surely, the great works of Sophocles are pure tragedy ; and yet they were not written only for the young ; and of all human compositions they are the most free from that vile trick of harrowing and breaking on the wheel which you so justly condemn. I might add many other instances, but this is the strongest.

I would not, on such a subject, be guided by Southey's judgment. There is nothing dramatic in his poetry ; much good description, much good declamation ; but, as far as I can recollect, nothing dramatic.

Ever yours truly,
T. B. Macaulay.

From Henry Taylor to his Wife.

Witton Hall, Witton-le-Wear, Darlington :
June 16, 1851.

Your letters, when they do come, are very nice and very precious. If I do not go mad for want of you, like Mr. Hart, I certainly go sad. I suppose it is for want of you, or for want of my youth, is it ? or for want of my genius ? I seem to myself to be shorn of all three. In walking the walks of thirty years ago, I try to make out what is the difference between the sadness of that time and

the sadness of this; and, as far as recollection serves me, I should say that, in a fair comparison, there is not much. It is strange to think how little, when the elements are so changed. The sense of the transitoriness of youth saddened me then as much as the loss of it now. The sense of imaginative power was not fully with me then, except occasionally. My sadness was, for the most part, a dreary and barren sadness. But though this was my condition for the most part, I could then rely upon an hour or two (or perhaps more) of a pleasurable nervous excitement in the evening, and this was a great thing to look forward to all the dreary day. Sometimes I had an hour or two of it in the early morning also. I suppose, too, there may have been a latent consciousness that there was something to come in life, that there was a world beyond the valley of the Wear.

My walks are exceedingly sad, I know not why. My mother is very cheerful, and I feel no anxiety about her at present; nor can I trace it to any specific loss or sorrow, though loss and sorrow there has been, and this is the place of it. I suppose it is just a state of the nerves, such a state as I was used to thirty years ago, and I shall make a rally soon, as was my wont, though the rallies of those days came by shorter returns.

The rainy storm of the morning changed to a fair storm this afternoon—fair though furious, as that woman of Titian's painting in the drawing-room at Kelston Place often has been, calm and collected

as she looks now—and I took courage to go down to the Lynn, and walked through the wood up the stream, rejoining the road by the gate opposite the mill, and then, leaving the road at the bridge, I took the lane that leads through the skirts of the wood on the right bank of the Wear, and followed it to the gate near Hamstirly, my other favourite walk of past times. It was in this walk that I plucked the dog-roses, and listened to the cushat in that summer of 1830 !

> Forgetful, for a season, of fixed loves
> And fugitive caresses.

There were no dog-roses out in it to-day ; the road was strewn here and there with a mixture of brown and green wreck—the beechmast of last year which had stuck to the bough all the winter through, to fall at last in a summer storm, and showers of thorn-blossom, and green seed-tassels of the ash. I did not turn to poetry for consolation as in that other summer, but there was one fixed love of which I was not forgetful, and there was consolation in that. And now I have had the consolation of talking of my senseless sadness, and I have talked of it enough.

> To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

June 18.

'Under the shade of melancholy boughs' still, dear Alice, but with dapplings of sunshine here and there ; and your letters come every day and do me good—a great deal of good, dear little Alice. And my mother, if she were a perfect stranger,

would be a most agreeable companion, and indeed a very cheerful one, for, even in the days when her strength seems hardly equal to a walk across the floor, her spirits do not falter.

I went to the churchyard this evening. There is no stone there yet, but there is no appearance of the grave being fresh. The grass on it is as long and thick as on my aunt's by its side. The boughs of an aspen and a sycamore hang over from the other side of the wall, and the corner of the churchyard is secluded, and closed in by the wall and the trees on the one side, and the church, three paces off, on the other.

June 19, 1851.

Yes, dearest, the way you speak of *is* the way to deal with these cloudy passages of life; and I dare say that, even though we do not make the most of them, we should all be worse without them. Flying from them to pleasure was not my way, even in youth; but I can give myself credit for little more than a quiet expecting of a better time. The last day or two I have had a good deal of pleasure in my long walks through lanes and woods abounding in wild flowers and in other details of natural beauty, little brooks, with little basins and caverned sides, and the growths that belong to them, and the water insects, that seem as if they had met to make a dance on the surface of the basin. I am more an observer of Nature now than I used to be, perhaps from being less occupied with thoughts. I used to love poetry for its own sake, but Nature for the sake of poetry.

From Henry Taylor to Sir Edmund Head.

November 16, 1851.

My dear Head,—Lord Grey gave me last night your private letter to him of October 25, from which I rejoice to learn that you prosper politically. I hope you prosper personally too; and, if you do, a line to that effect would be very acceptable in this house.

Lord Grey said to me, some months ago, that your appointment was the best hit he had made since he had been in office; adding that he claimed no credit for it, and that it was more good luck than anything else. He said last night that you were about the best man we had. I know nothing about your politics, and I care nothing about any politics, except in so far as they are connected with persons that I care for, but he gives you credit for a gift in the managing of men.

Since I last wrote to you I suppose something has happened, but it is difficult to say what. You have probably heard of the Exhibition—a perfect exemplar of the spirit of the times, useful improvements, mechanical inventions, wares and merchandise, the kingdoms of the earth and the glory thereof, painting in occultation, sculpture exposing itself. The nations shook hands, and the world seemed to be in a state of exultation, thinking what a clever world it was. Let us hope that some good will come of its wealth and its clever ways; but I wish it would bear in mind that these things are not necessarily

good in themselves ; that material progress, though it helps moral progress in some ways, retards it in others ; and that, if the one outruns the other, it will have to go back and fetch up the other.

Every five or six years we have a crisis by way of evidence that we are not in a state to bear commercial prosperity beyond a certain point, after reaching which the commercial classes and the greedy classes are presently to be seen retracing their steps ; like a broken-down gambler going home at three o'clock in the morning with a pistol in his pocket to provide him with the necessaries of life, and the *animus furandi* to animate him.

My observation of the world leads me to care less than most people for its wealth and prosperity ; though these, like its adversity, may be useful in their time and in their turn.

So I walked past the Exhibition like a man whose heart was on the opposite side of the way—that is, at Rutland Gate.

The Alfred Tennysons have come to live at Twickenham, which is a great gain to us. He is a very interesting person, a singular compound of manliness and helplessness—manly in his simplicity, and, I should think, in his understanding also. A new edition of his 'In Memoriam' is just out, 5,000 strong ; and, except Wordsworth for some ten years of his life, I should think he is the only really popular poet since Byron. His intellect at large, though good, is not, I think, great in proportion to the imaginative

and poetical elements of it; and, therefore, I do not anticipate that he will take any such place in poetry as is filled by Coleridge or Wordsworth; but I think that his poetry will be felt to be admirable in its kind, and may well displace the poetry of sensibility and beauty which has gone before it in the present age.

James Stephen is living at Richmond, in tolerably good health, which may continue as long as he can keep his brains to a canter; when they run away with him he is likely to be thrown, as he has been three or four times, with no little danger to life. He has just published his 'Lectures on French History,' in two large octavo volumes.

Spedding works away at his 'Bacon' with the same slow assiduity and smouldering ardour. When will you come and see us all again—all the bald and grey-headed generation of us? Does leave of absence never enter into your imagination? Does Lady Head never mention it to you? If not, don't give my love to her.

Ever yours affectionately,

H. T.

From Henry Taylor to the Editor of the 'North British Review.'

Colonial Office, London: May 1, 1852.

Sir,—I am exceedingly obliged to you for sending me the 33rd No. of your Review, and for calling my attention to the very remarkable paper at the beginning of it.

The measure of giving Parliamentary seats without votes to persons holding certain offices is, in my mind, the first thing needful for the reform of the executive. Mr. Hyde Villiers, who died in 1833, had at one time designed to bring such a measure under the consideration of the House of Commons, and I had much discussion with him on the subject. I have recently spoken of it to some persons of great experience in Parliamentary and official life, and I cannot find that there is any substantial objection to it, at least any such objection as ought to prevail. The most material objection which occurs to me is that by giving Peers in office access to the House of Commons it would weaken the House of Lords, more than would be counterbalanced by giving Commons in office access to the House of Lords. This point, I think, would have to be considered with a view to devise some means of obviating the evil, for an evil it certainly would be to have all deliberation and debate sucked into the Commons' House.

The measure is one which would have to be much pressed upon the House of Commons from without

to induce them to adopt it. The members of that House who can command permanent seats in it are the great majority, and they have now a monopoly of eligibility to political office which they will not willingly part with.

In the accounts given of our leading statesmen I find much that I agree in as far as my knowledge extends, but something also from which I totally differ. I have served under thirteen Secretaries of State, and have thus had peculiar opportunities of measuring their administrative powers, and Lord Grey is the one whom I should place first. His unpopularity arises in a great degree from his public spirit, which has taken little account of the interests of parties and individuals, and less of his own, when opposed to public interests. He is ardent and tenacious in his opinions, but I think it a great mistake to suppose that he is haughty and imperious in his temper of mind. When public interests have permitted it, I have not known any man more careful of the interests and feelings of those serving under him in the Colonies, or more truly liberal in his manner of dealing with them. The account of Lord Aberdeen is also, I think, unjust. In my estimation he was a firm and efficient Minister (though he may not be equal to the enormous amount of labour which is required in some departments of the Government), and in point of character he has some rare and excellent qualifications for high office.

Not knowing to whom I am writing, I have

hazarded these remarks merely in acknowledgment of the attention shown to me in sending me this number of your Review.

I have, &c.,

H. Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to Earl Grey.

Colonial Office : May 6, 1852.

Dear Lord Grey,—I have read your Introduction, and I do not see how it could be better, and, as to shortness, people do not read such things for amusement, and to those who read for information and instruction it is more important that a paper should be clear and fluent and easily understood than that it should be short.

On one or two points I should wish it enlarged rather than abridged, and especially on the doctrine of leaving the Colonies to govern themselves.

I have long wished to see some authentic and impressive statement of some truths on this subject, which are rather involved in your views than developed :

1st. That leaving a colony to govern itself means, in the case of many colonies, leaving a dominant party to govern the rest.

2nd. That the discontent engendered by the interference of the Home Government is in those cases the discontent of the dominant few (who can alone make themselves heard in this country) at

interference exercised for the protection of the helpless and ignorant many.

3rd. That it is for the ease, interest, and advantage of every Home Government for the time being to leave the Colonies to be governed by dominant factions, however oppressively or corruptly, and that it is only some sense erroneous or correct of public duty, opposed to its ease, interest, and advantage, which can lead the Home Government to exercise interference.

4th. That, even where the welfare of ignorant and unrepresented populations does not require the Home Government to control the local Legislatures, there is another consideration which may require it, which consideration is *the honour of the Crown*, and that so long as the Crown is a branch of the Legislatures—that is, so long as the Colonies are Colonies—it must be the duty of the Ministers of the Crown to prevent the Crown from becoming a party to acts of injustice and dishonesty and bad faith.

It appears to me to be important to dwell upon these points in a defence of your administration, because the continued cry has been about *meddling*, and, if the instances which have led to this cry were to be sifted, I believe they would fall under the heads I have mentioned. Within my own knowledge there would be the resistance to the reduction of salaries guaranteed by law in British Guiana (injustice) ; the levy of import duties on goods consumed by the labourers for the purpose of raising funds to bring

immigrant labourers to compete with them (injustice); the bringing of ignorant immigrants from uncivilised countries on any terms, and in any way that they could be got (injustice and dishonesty); the withdrawal in Jamaica of revenue pledged by law to the payment of the public debt (dishonesty), and I dare say many others if I had not forgotten them.

There is, I think, only one material point in your paper on which I differ from you, and it is one which you must have considered much more elaborately than I have had occasion to do, and on which you must have definitively made up your mind. It is, therefore, not very well worth while to mention it, but I cannot but regard the North American Provinces as a most dangerous possession for this country, whether as likely to breed a war with the United States, or to make a war otherwise generated more grievous and disastrous. I do not suppose the provinces to be useless to us at present, but I regard any present uses not obtainable from them as independent nations to be no more than the dust of the balance as compared with the evil contingencies.

I have written what occurs to me on a first reading of your Introduction, but I should like to come and speak to you when I have read it again, which I shall have done by to-morrow afternoon. I shall, therefore, keep it till then unless you should want it before.

Yours very truly,

Henry Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to Alfred Tennyson.

Mortlake : November 17, 1852.

My dear Tennyson,—I have read your ode,[1] and I believe that many thousands at present, and that many hundreds of thousands in future times, will feel about it as I do, or with a yet stronger and deeper feeling ; and I am sure that every one will feel about it according to his capacity of feeling what is great and true. It has a greatness worthy of its theme, and an absolute simplicity and truth, with all the poetic passion of your nature moving beneath.

I hear that you are going to see the Duke buried. I am rather effeminate in the matter, and shrink from it.

Ever yours sincerely,

H. Taylor.

From Alfred Tennyson to Henry Taylor.

Seaford House, Seaford : November 23, 1852.

Thanks, thanks ! I have just returned from Reading and found your letter.

In the all but universal depreciation of my ode by the Press, the prompt and hearty approval of it by a man as true as the Duke himself is doubly grateful.

Ever, my dear Taylor, yours,

A. Tennyson.

[1] *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.*

From Henry Taylor to James Marshall.

The Uplands: December 16, 1854.

There are one or two other views of mine about carrying on the war which I should like to mention to you in confidence. I think that the Duke of Newcastle is not the man who should have been charged with it. He is a sensible, industrious, well-conditioned man, and there is an end of him. He has sense and judgment to adopt, but he has not vigour to originate or to urge, and he does not know where to find serviceable men, or how to choose them. Lord Grey, in my judgment, has all the faculties and qualities required for the office of War Minister; but he would not duck under to the Press or do anything to conciliate it, and the Press has accordingly deprived the country of the Minister who could have done most for it in this exigency. He has his faults, and they are faults which *help* to make him unpopular; but his unpopularity is mainly owing to an uncompromising public spirit, which led him to sacrifice private interests of individuals and particular bodies unsparingly to what he believed to be the public good. The public is what some people say it is apt to be—ignorant and ungrateful. Individuals and bodies are vindictive, and the Press is with them. This explains the present position of Lord Grey. I speak of both these men as far as I know with impartiality. They have both been friendly and kind and personally agreeable to me. I have an older and

a more friendly regard for Lord Grey. I know him well, and, of the fifteen Secretaries of State under whom I have served, he is the most able and vigorous administrator, and by far the best qualified for carrying on the war.

From Henry Taylor to W. R. Greg.

The Uplands, East Sheen : March 9, 1855.

Sir,—I am very much obliged to you for sending me your pamphlets. I had already read the 'One Thing Needful,' and I have now read the other. As far as I can judge (I should say, however, that I read only one newspaper) they were very much needed, for the views which they contain seem to me to be for the most part just, and, in their totality and combination, such as are not current or hitherto much received into men's minds. They are certainly stated by you with great force and very impressively.

Perhaps you rather undervalue the importance of a certain steadiness in the handling of instruments.

My own feeling has always been that they ought to be chosen with the utmost care, but that, being chosen, they ought not to be thrown aside without absolute necessity. If the hand that guides the instrument be not steady, neither will the instrument itself be steady. I think our generals in the field should feel a strong confidence that they will be supported through all vicissitudes of fortune, and further, that they will be supported through many blunders

and avoidable disasters so long as they are doing their best, and are capable of doing well on the whole.

As to Lord Raglan, we have not heard his case. His silence under public reproach is evidence to me of great strength of mind, and is also a strong presumption that he stands clear in his own eyes ; and, as no one has ever charged him with vanity or self-complacency, I for my own part should be ready to adopt his judgment of himself as against any judgment formed by others on any data which are before the public. What data may be before the Government I know not.

I have asked many men who spoke of the recall of Lord Raglan, some of them men who should have been able to give an answer if answer could be given, who was the more capable man by whom they should propose to replace him. I have not found that they had their resources at hand. Where to find men and how to choose them is an art which none of our statesmen have acquired, and I very much fear that they have not studied it as they ought. I do not say this without means of knowing it, for I have served under seventeen Secretaries of State. Far more bad appointments have arisen from the want of this art than from any want of good intentions and public spirit.

If the proposal were to give the command in chief to one of the generals now serving under Lord Raglan, I should doubt the wisdom of it ; because,

Lord Raglan being a man to whom advice and assistance would be cordially given, and by whom it would be readily accepted, I should infer that, if the generals serving under him had been capable of surmounting the difficulties that were met with, they would have helped *him* to surmount them.

Many years ago, in reading contemporary accounts of the Peninsular War, and the debates in Parliament at the time, I formed an opinion that if we had had a reformed Parliament in the year 1810, the Duke of Wellington would have been recalled on the retreat to Torres Vedras. The outcry against him on the part of Parliament, the country, and his own army, and the charges of imbecility, cowardice, treachery, and so forth, had something of the same character as the present clamour. I use the word 'clamour' not as prejudging the grounds, but only as signifying an outcry on knowledge which, extensive and minute as it is, may be, and probably is, essentially partial and imperfect. Nothing but the rotten boroughs could have enabled the Government to keep him in his command.

I expressed this opinion to Lord John Russell at the breaking out of the present war, and my fears that he might find it impracticable to make war with success under a reformed House of Commons. He did not share my fears, and quoted a dictum of Sir Robert Peel's, delivered in Lord John's presence the day before he fell from his horse, that 'the House of Commons is a timid body.' It may be so, but the

events of the last month have shown us that the Government is a timid body also.

All the world, like yourself, are, and have been for years, demanding a strong Government; but how few will imitate you in contributing to its strength by forbearance and a disposition to give it long credit!

With many thanks for your kindness in sending me the pamphlets,

Believe me yours very faithfully,

H. Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to Aubrey de Vere.

The Uplands, East Sheen, Surrey: April 9, 1855.

To your question I answer that I think Shakespeare was probably of the religion of James Spedding—perhaps still less disposed to argumentative inquiry, and ready to acquiesce in everything that he did not *dis*believe. But I will make inquiry about it as you desire.

I have read and considered your volume a great deal, and written to you not a little upon it with the mind's pen, curious to know, if you be not a great poet, wherein you fail. Not in intellect, certainly, for therein you range with Coleridge and Wordsworth, and above Tennyson; not in art or the rhythmic sense, for in that you are equal to Wordsworth; not in fancy, of which you have more than any of them. Is it, then, in human and imaginative passion? That, I think, is the only question. Do your ardours and raptures partake more of intellectual and spiritual

excitement than of poetic passion? for I rather think there is a real distinction, and that the passion which exercises a poetic power over the minds of others is a passion connected with the human and earthly senses and affections. From time to time in your poetry you do *touch* the deepest depths of poetic passion, but you do not dwell in them. Your 'Winter' of the 'Year of Sorrow' has as deep a tragic power as any poem in the 'In Memoriam,' and perhaps a higher sublimity than any; but there is no other poem in the volume which is like it; or at least there is none which possesses the same qualities in the same or in like manner.

If passion be the element which is defective in your poetry—i.e. relatively defective, less abounding than other elements, and mastered by them—that will account for its want of popularity, since intellectual poetry is a fatigue and a riddle to the popular mind if unimpassioned; and nothing but high excitement of the senses and feelings will disclose it to such minds. Give them that, and even what is unintelligible to them does not seem so.

I often meditate the question whether your poetry will ever be so far popular as to reach the mass of the cultivated classes; whether it is now in that subterranean stage of its existence through which that of Coleridge and Wordsworth crept for twenty years, and that of Tennyson for ten, to issue at last into light. If we were to judge by the history of past literature, I suppose there is no doubt that no

example can be found of poetry of this order having perished ; and if it be answered that the fact of its having perished would preclude our knowledge of its existence, I do not feel that answer to be of any real weight. So many traces are found on all sides of things so much more perishable, that there is a strong presumption against the utter annihilation of the memory and record of such poetry, had it ever existed. But the question is whether, in the present state of mankind—so much more mutable than in past ages—history is prophetic.

As to myself and your old and ever-renewed exhortations, I need more acceptation of my poetry in the present time to assure me of its acceptation in the future. For the present may be a better exponent of the future than the past, and everything before us is doubtful, because Time is no longer pursuing a beaten track. If I were to judge from the past, I should have no doubts ; for I believe no one, unless it be yourself, has so high an opinion of my poetry as I have.

But even if sanguine anticipations of fame were to be added to a superlative estimate of my own genius (and both are necessary to a poet, perhaps, to give him courage and faith), I should hardly be led to undertake any serious enterprise in my fifty-fifth year, with business on my hands daily, and a wife and family round about me. Leisure and a sense of solitude are as necessary as hope and a high opinion of oneself.

From Henry Taylor to his Wife.

Hanley Castle, Worcester: April 30, 1855.

I got her[1] to talk a good deal yesterday about my (own) mother, thinking that she is the only person left who knew her, and that this may be the last opportunity of hearing anything about her. I asked if she was not considered plain. She said that on taking her to pieces you might make out that she was plain, but she never could have thought her so in looking at her. Her eyes were very bright coloured and her complexion very fair, like the complexion which generally belongs to red hair, though her hair was flaxen—not a very good complexion, and the chin rather fell away, which was a blemish in her face; but the expression, and especially the smile, was beautiful, and her movements went along with the countenance and were very pretty and expressive; and she was the most kind and benevolent and sweet-tempered person she had ever known, and very clever and very learned. There were men surrounding her wherever she went, and lovers, and for that reason women called her a flirt, which she was not in the slightest degree. She was of a tall, thin figure and had delicate health, and was taken every year to a sea-bathing place called 'Blue Horse,' near Sunderland, and it was there that my father met her first. He was four or five years younger than she. They were four years married. She had children too rapidly—

[1] His aunt.

three in three years—and fell into a consumption partaking of atrophy after the birth of the last. She had a general cheerfulness, not rising into high spirits at times, but pretty uniform.

This is my aunt's account of my mother as nearly as possible in her own words. The smile and the movements and gestures seemed to be what she recollected with most admiration, and the benevolence. And the act of benevolence to her (then a child, I suppose) was when she was making mistakes in dancing and everybody was laughing at her, my mother showing her how to dance in the right way and taking great pains to help her. How a small kindness may be remembered through a long life!

From Henry Taylor to his Wife.

The Grange : January 7, 1856.

And now I suppose you want some gossiping details of what is going on, and I must try to Boswellize. There was a lively passage of arms yesterday after luncheon between Lady Harriet[1] and me, and I think that for once I was the better man and carried the day. Present—Mrs. Brookfield, Miss Baring, Alfred Tennyson, Doyle, and Venables.

I was by way of giving a salutary warning to Alfred Tennyson, saying, 'Twenty years ago I was the last new man, and where am I now?' whereupon she rose up in defence of her constancy and said that

[1] Lady Ashburton.

when we first met I was very fond of her and she liked me very much, and of course we saw a great deal of each other, and then I married and filled my house with children, and, what with my office and what with my children, I seldom came to her at Bath House, and when I came it was always when the train was just going, and altogether it was a different thing, and of course one's affection for one's old friends *was* a different thing. Then Alfred Tennyson asked what time it took to make an old friend, and I replied that with her five years reduced it to the decencies of dry affection. She contended that I was using her very ill, and said she would write to Alice, and she knew my wife would support her; and then she appealed to Mrs. Brookfield to say if her friendships did not last, which I interrupted by saying I did not dispute that they *hardened* into permanence. But what I was speaking of was the case of Alfred Tennyson, and I could only say that this time last year I had seen Mr. Goldwin Smith sitting by her side at dinner just as I had seen Alfred Tennyson yesterday, and that I expected to see Alfred Tennyson this time next year occupying the position which I was told Mr. Goldwin Smith had occupied when he was here last week. I had not seen it myself, but it had been described to me; he came to the Grange last year innocent and happy, in the bloom of youth, with violet eyes, and what he was now I had not seen but I had heard of it. She said that, as to Mr. Goldwin Smith, he was coming as a stranger last year;

and, as one does when a man is a stranger and perhaps a little shy, she had him to sit next her once, and she had had Alfred Tennyson to sit next her twice, and Mr. Goldwin Smith, when he came this year, found nothing amiss except that he had got a liver complaint. I replied, 'Ah, that's what you bring men to; broken-hearted men always do have liver complaints.' 'Then,' Alfred Tennyson said, 'it appears by what you say yourself that you do not show me any particular favours.' She answered: 'Well, it is a different sort of feeling that one has for a new friend and an old one; but you, Mr. Venables, are now almost an old acquaintance, and you can say what you feel about it.' Then, as Venables was beginning to bear his testimony, to his infinite horror Alfred said: 'Why, you told me yourself that Lady Ashburton had been very kind to you at first, and that now'—here Venables stopped him, speaking aside in a deprecating tone, and I ended the debate by saying, 'Well, Tennyson, all I can say is that my advice to you is to rise with your winnings and be off.' Venables said to Mrs. Brookfield afterwards that Alfred was truly an *enfant terrible*.

January 9, 1856.

There was no pain given in those passages between Lady Harriet and me. At least, I did not think there was. Mrs. Brookfield thinks she saw a slight wincing. It was all light, gay, stingless talk.

I was not serious in thinking there was any token of inconstancy in her taking a fancy to Alfred Tennyson. On the contrary, I should be sorry if she had lost her susceptibility to take fancies of the kind ; and in reality I agree with her in thinking that they are quite compatible with a strong adhesion to old friendships and affections. What is less compatible with it is a life of society. That life must needs in some degree dissipate and dilute the permanent affections ; but I think that—life and habits considered—Lady Harriet's affections are strong and durable. And it should never be forgotten that, being without children, and the friends to whom she has given her affections being *with* children, she has had to feel that she could not be a first, or even a second or third object to her friends, and thus she has been thrown upon society more perhaps than—even with her great talent and facilities for it—she otherwise might have been. To you and to me, our four children ; to Mrs. Brookfield, —— and —— are more dear and important and engrossing, each and every of them, than Lady Harriet. With Carlyle it is otherwise, and I should think that her affection for him has been invariable and undecaying. Indeed, I see no reason to suspect that it has been otherwise with us, only that in the case of each of us the affection began in a fancy and a sentiment, and of course it had (like all such) to pass into another state. For my own part, I always feel in my relations with her that I get as much as I give, though it is possible

enough that were I to get more I might give more; that is, if she were less occupied with her life of society, and less reserved as to her inner life, we might have a deeper interest in each other. On the other hand, it is possible also that in that case I, occupied with my wife and children, might get more than I should give.

The party is now tolerably harmonious and congruous; but Lady Harriet says that a little while ago there was a state of things in which she had had more difficulty in keeping things straight than she had ever had in her life before, and that the effort had been so dreadful that she could not have gone on with it for three days more. Now all is smooth, and yesterday's dinner would have seemed a very gay one to me if I had not happened to be within myself very gloomy. Carlyle broke into one of his best laughs over a story which he told himself, the grotesque power of it seeming to provoke his mirth to the utmost. He told it as an example of the pertinacity with which drinking parties in Scotland fifty years ago used to go through a drinking bout of six or seven days' duration, without interruption from any accident or event that might happen. A friend from a distance arrived at the house and came in upon such a drinking party, and, after joining them and looking round, he said, 'Disna the Laird of Invercaldy look unco' *gash* the day?' (ghastly). 'Aye,' answered the host, 'he may weel look gash, he's been dead these twa days.' Carlyle had this story told him lately,

and he has been telling it again to one person or another every day, and following it with his wildest laugh. He seems to be in good humour, but Lady Harriet complains that when some one asked whether Lord Ashburton was coming back to-day, he answered, 'Oh no; he'll not come back; he's got into a quiet house there by himself, and what should he come back here for?' He is coming back, however. Carlyle told another story of one of the Lords of Session in Scotland, a Lord Justice Clerk who lived in the beginning of this century, a strange, rough, gruff judge, who used to take sketches of people in court with a pen and ink. One day he asked the usher, 'Wha's that man yonder?' 'That's the plaintiff, my Lord.' 'Ou! he's the plaintiff, is he? he's a queer-looking fellow; I think I'll decide against him and see how he'll look.'

Mr. Galton, the African traveller, has arrived, and looks trim and neat and sharp; a tight, active, intelligent person, but more like a man who had lived in the shelter of academic bowers than like a sojourner with savages.

And now to a heavy pouch if Lady Sandwich will let me, who is sitting at the little writing-table, where all my papers lie.

From Henry Taylor to Aubrey de Vere.

The Uplands, East Sheen, Surrey : February 7, 1856.

What you propose for me would be very pleasant, but time and activity are utterly wanting for it. I get up at half-past seven ; I get to work about nine ; I send off my pouch by the one o'clock post ; at half-past one I dine ; at two I set off for the 2.14 train, which takes me to my office by 3.10. I work there till six ; I return to Mortlake by the 6.15 train ; I have tea at 7.30 ; I read the newspaper, or perhaps a bit of a book, very sleepily, or try to talk, till ten, and then I go to bed. Where is Chaucer to come in ? Between eight and ten is the only possible time, and my small measure of activity is spent by that time, and Chaucer would not thank me for the dregs of the day.

I *did* receive the ode on the death of Lord Belfast, and I think it a very poetical poem.

And I *have* read the ' Angel in the House,' and it seemed to me to be a poem of rare and peculiar amenity and grace. I know not where else in these days one can find that easy, gentle, and ingratiating temper in poetry, so free from forced stimulus and false allurement. I am sorry he is writing a second part. Nothing is more important to a light poem of that kind than to be rounded off briefly and lie in a ring fence. Even if another poem of equal merit in the same kind could be produced, the effect of both would be partly injured by the feeling that it was a

thing which could be done twice over. But the chances are that the second poem will be inferior. Is there any instance in which second parts, which are second thoughts and did not enter into the original structure, have not halted ?

From Henry Taylor to the Hon. Mrs. Edward Villiers.

Seaton Carew, Stockton-on-Tees : July 15, 1856.

I was thinking of writing to you yesterday, not to ask after your health, for I had heard that you were pretty well two or three days ago, but to ask after your goings and comings and doings and sayings ; but I find from your letter of to-day that there was some health to be asked after too, and that the account I had received was either erroneous or not applicable to the present moment. However, you seem to be making your usual jumble of grave and gay and lively and severe, and I trust you will come out of it with your usual success. Still, I should like to hear that you were a little steadier in health.

We passed a fortnight at Headingley, the J. Marshall's place near Leeds, and then came on to this village on the coast of Durham, where we met with some difficulties at first because Mrs. Vitty, the principal baker, grocer, chandler, and butter-dealer, was short of bread ; and Mr. Watts, the principal shoemaker, chemist, upholsterer, and butcher, could not recommend his beef, his veal, his lamb, or his mutton that day, inasmuch as he had got none ; and

Miss Lithgo, the milliner, stationer, and milkwoman, had only a pint of milk on hand at that moment; but we borrowed two loaves of bread and half a peck of potatoes, and found our way to a farm producing milk and eggs, and so we made a shift to live over the first day or two, and then we learnt the ways of the world in this corner of it, and how a butcher came from a neighbouring town twice a week with the best of everything, and how there was excellent flour to be had though not bread, and how there were potatoes to be had at Stockton-on-Tees; and now we are living in plenty and in luxury. And, indeed, wherever I go in the world I seem to myself to find new examples of the manner in which the luxury of the rich overreaches itself and will hardly stand in comparison with the comforts of the poor, in many particulars at least. For instance, here I have a little comfortable pillow to my bed, which just fits into the hollow between the head and the shoulder and makes it all rest and level-lying, whereas at Headingley I had a huge, swelling pillow. And, again, in the house we have here, if anything be lost, the governess for instance, it must be in this room or in the room below, because there are no others, so one easily falls in with it.

The air suits all the party, except myself, and *I* am very well, though rather overbraced and not so lazy as I would wish to be in my feelings. The children thrive on it, and they take off their shoes and stockings and paddle in the sea. The baby is

too strong for any hand that is over him. Alice continues to say that he is a saint and a martyr. I believe he is, and, taking his mother, Mary, and Susan to be the world, the flesh, and the devil, he keeps up, as in duty bound, a continual conflict with them. However, the sands are extensive, and he cannot be heard in every part of them.

Thanks for your rose-coloured account of Aubrey de Vere. I was glad to have heard from another quarter that he is light, gay, fresh, and pleasant as ever. God bless you !

From Henry Taylor to a Friend on her Marriage.

165 New Bond Street, W. : October 21, 1856 .

God bless you, my love, in this and all things else ! I seem to see a very happy life before you, and I believe you *will* be very happy, but such happiness is a serious thing and may well be taken with a trembling hand ; and you have much in your own nature to conquer, and unless you conquer it, no outward circumstance, not even one so inwardly outward as a good husband, can give you assurance of a happiness that is to last. He may control the wilfulness of a wife, or he may indulge it. The latter is the way of most men, and from appearances I should imagine that it would be his way. If he should control it, be just to his rights. If he should indulge it, be generous and do not abuse his indulgence. Self-will is selfishness, and in a woman it is that sort

of selfishness which most endangers the happiness of married life. The point on which you will need to remind yourself to be generous is in a generous subjection of your will.

You call yourself my pupil, and it is therefore that I teach and preach. God bless you both!

Ever yours affectionately,

H. T.

From Aubrey de Vere to Henry Taylor.[1]

Rome: December 17, 1856.

My dear Henry,—The news which I have just received from you ought not to be as sad news as I find it actually to be. She is removed from what has for years been a life of great suffering, and of almost constant suffering; and assuredly at no time during several years could her removal have taken any of her friends by surprise. But death must still be death while we sit in this eclipse here below; and I have not yet got used to the thought that I shall see no more in this life one who to me too (though, of course, not in the same sense as to you) has been for many years so much interwoven with it. She was so much not only to me, but to many others who are also much to me; indeed, she was such a connecting-link between them, that on that account too one feels the separation. She must ever have, as for years she

[1] On the occasion of Miss Fenwick's death. Sir Henry Taylor has written on the first page, 'It is a precious letter.'

has had, a daily place in my prayers ; and I shall ever remember her as one of the noblest and most great-hearted beings I have been permitted to know. In her peculiar characteristics of moral and imaginative elevation and generosity of nature, the person who most resembles her (of those whom I know) is my sister. I wish that she had had the privilege of knowing her, which my father and mother enjoyed, though in different degrees. They both of them appreciated her from the moment they saw her, their acquaintance beginning under her own roof near Windermere, when they met there Wordsworth and poor Hartley Coleridge, and the Quillinans—now all gone. When one looks back on these things life seems indeed but a dream ; and to love, as well as to faith, it is the unseen things that become the realities. In some things how much she resembled Wordsworth ; but then how free she was from that alloy of egotism which commonly clings to the largest masculine nature! There was another great point of difference. His was pre-eminently a happy, and, in the main, even a satisfied life. Hers, I am convinced, never was so ; certainly never from the hour I saw her first, as she rose, with her languid, reluctant form and nobly-sorrowful face, from the sofa in your back drawing-room at Blandford Square, to shake hands with your new friend. Even had she been well and strong all her life, though she would have had soaring hours in larger abundance, there would have remained a craving not to be satisfied.

Perhaps, had she possessed the closer ties of life, she would have felt this lack but the more. Her heart was as tender as her aspirations were elevated and unremitting; and such a being in a world like this must ever be condemned (so far as the outward life goes, and even the life of the affections is part of the outward life) to 'draw nectar in a sieve.' In any case, she would have felt, I think, the force of an expression of Wordsworth's which I once heard her praise—viz. the '*defrauded* heart'; though, had her body not been the opposite of her mind, she would have had the imaginative and elemental joys of life in rare abundance. But we may not doubt that it has been far better for her as her lot was cast; for the will of God must needs be the best for every one who conforms to it, or sincerely endeavours to conform to it. I regard her life as a long penance or purgatory; and it is but according to God's ordinary dealings that the greatest natures should be visited with the most of that divine and merciful fire which in the spirit remains but as light, and which consumes but that which had need to be consumed, in order that the light might shine clear. Great love, great aspiration, great suffering: these are the recollections which will, perhaps, remain longest with me as representing the earthly life of Miss Fenwick, and it seems part of the divine design that these three should be commonly closely united.

I feel her loss very much on your account; for, no matter how great the release to her in shaking off

the burden of mortality, the breaking of a tie one of the closest you ever had, and the earliest of those which have remained to you of late years, is a sad thing. But ties that are removed from the senses live on, and often live their truest life within our souls, and are fruitful there. You were probably by much the dearest object she had in life. And her benignant influence will assuredly be about you ever. This will be a part of her reward.

Yours ever affectionately,

AUBREY DE VERE.

From Sir James Stephen to Henry Taylor.

29 Melbourne Terrace, London : August 17, 1858.

My dear Taylor,— . . . . There is nobody left in London except myself and the Lord Mayor. How his lordship amuses himself I know not ; but I am reading that I may write, and writing that I may lecture.[1] My change of crop—from despatches to lectures—makes but little difference as to the amount of the produce. I am like a farmer who towards the end of his lease scourges his land unmercifully. I should earn just as much or as little money and worship if I could be satisfied to repeat my old discourses ; but I should lose my occupation, and my thoughts, which I now to a certain degree compel to dress and fall into a line and march, would be sprawling about in all quarters. A job is as

[1] As Professor of Modern History at Cambridge.

necessary to me as a cigar or Lord Bacon is to Spedding—so necessary indeed that (I am almost ashamed to add) I have engaged myself to take a second in a performance about to come off at Liverpool, in which Lord John Russell is to play first fiddle.

Why (asks Mrs. Taylor), why don't the poor old man's wife and children prevent his making such a fool of himself? Because they are all away—my wife and daughter in Wales, and my sons, with knapsacks on their shoulders, one in Scotland, the other in Switzerland; because also they probably think that my company and my discourse are all the better for my having on my own shoulders and on my mind a load like one of your tawny leather bags. It prevents one from descanting on the follies of the world, or on his own follies.

I have just been released from attendance on the Baron Marochetti, who undertook to exhibit me in marble. He began his work by assuring me that he never flattered, and he has ended it by being as good as his word. Now, to pay a man more than would maintain a hard-working curate a whole year for twelve hours' work in moulding one's visage, and to get no flattery after all, is really to burn one of Mr. Ruskin's 'Lamps of Truth' at a very high cost.

Ever affectionately yours,

James Stephen.

From Henry Taylor to Lady Mary Labouchere.

34 Marina, St. Leonards-on-Sea : September 4, 1858.

I read Shakespeare to Alice and Aubrey and Miss Harley for an hour and a half before dinner. That reading of Shakespeare to boys and girls (if it be well read, and if they be apt), I regard as carrying with it a deeper cultivation than anything else which can be done to cultivate them ; and I often think how strange it is that amongst all the efforts which are made in these times to teach young people everything that is to be known, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall, the one thing omitted is teaching them to read. At present, to be sure, it is a very rare thing to find any one who *can* teach it ; but it is an art which might be propagated from the few to the many with great rapidity, if a due appreciation of it were to become current. The rage for lecturing would be a more reasonable rage if that were taught in lectures which can be conveyed only by voice and utterance, and not by books. A few weeks ago I was pointing out to Dr. Whewell one of the most sublime and majestic passages that I know of in prose—a passage in one of Bacon's prefaces—and I asked him to read it aloud. I was astonished to find that he read it as the town crier might have read it. It could not be that he was insensible to the grace and beauty of the language ; I believe he was no more insensible to it than I am to the beauty of a Raphael or a Perugino ; but he was no more able to

produce it in utterance than I am to paint a 'St. Cecilia' or an 'Incendio del Borgo.'

Thank you for what you wrote to me from Castlesteward. There was nothing but what it gave me pleasure to read.

> Gently on man does gentle Nature lay
> The burthen of old age.

I trust it is so for the most part; but my experience of the latter years of aged friends has happened to be of a painful kind in some instances, and as I see one friend after another advance into 'the years in which they shall say that they have no pleasure in them,' my constant desire is for as early and easy an escape as it may please God to grant them. Your mother, though she lived to old age, seems never to have reached the years in which we say that we have no pleasure in them; and I trust it will be so with your husband's mother also.

God bless you!

From Henry Taylor to the Bishop of Carlisle.[1]

East Sheen, S.W.: January 23, 1860.

My dear Bishop of Carlisle,—I enclose you such literary autographs as I can muster, and all that I shall ask of you in return is a small living for my youngest son, now five years old, who promises to make an exemplary clergyman. I am quite aware of

[1] In reply to a letter from the Bishop of Carlisle, begging for some autographs of literary men for his daughter's album.

the report which has gone abroad that he was found with his muzzle six inches deep in a jar of strawberry jam, and I know also it has been stated that the chastisement he underwent produced not so much an acknowledgment of the sinfulness of the act as a testimony to the goodness of the jam. But these things happened long ago, and I trust that the indiscretions of his earlier years will not be allowed to operate to the prejudice of his prospects in the Church.

Believe me, ever yours sincerely,

H. Taylor.

From Earl Grey to Henry Taylor.

Athenæum Club: April 21, 1860.

My dear Taylor,—Your kind letter reached me just as I was coming out this afternoon, and gave me great pleasure.

I am glad you approved of my speech. I think the *design* was good, but I was dreadfully disappointed with the execution. It was one of my days of being horridly nervous, and I missed much of the most important part of what I wanted to say, and very imperfectly stated the rest. I quite agree with you as to the great importance of the fact that large constituencies are so apt to be indifferent to character in the choice of their representatives; it is one of the worst symptoms of the state of the country. But it is impossible to touch upon this in public discussion: nobody

in private hesitates to say that —— is a blackguard, and —— a good-for-nothing profligate; but this cannot be said in public. It is quite true that the best thing to inculcate upon electors would be that they should be guided by what they know of men's private character; this is a more important consideration than their political opinions.

I have good hopes now that we shall, at least for a year, avert the passing of any reform bill, and this will be a great thing to gain. Time, for the country to understand the question better, is much wanted.

I hope I shall be able to get down to Sheen some morning, if the weather would but get rather better.

Yours very truly,

GREY.

As you do not mention Mrs. Taylor, I trust she is quite well.

From Henry Taylor to the Countess of Minto.

East Sheen: October 4, 1861.

. . . . And now as to the 'Notes.'[1] I have not often, if ever, read a little bit of biography which, with so light a touch, takes so strong a hold. Is it not the fact that the biography of a family is a more interesting thing than the biography of a man? Or, rather, that the life of a man, which must always, of course, include something, ought to include more

[1] *Notes from Minto Manuscripts*, privately printed, and afterwards embodied in the *Memoir of Hugh Elliot*, by the Countess of Minto.

than it generally does include of the lives of those with whom he lives? Also that the letters written *to* a man will often tell us as much of him as the letters written *by* him; and that what is often miscalled a man's 'correspondence' should be what it professes to be, and not what it generally is, only his *letters?* I am sure this is the case when the subject of a biography, being himself a remarkable man, corresponds with remarkable men and women (as will commonly happen), and is one of a remarkable family. Not only the interweaving of personal interests is to be considered, but also the effect of variety; and, as to the letters, even if those the man has written be better worth reading than any he has received (which will not always happen), still they will be read with more pleasure occurring amongst others than in a simple sequence. I hope you are going on, and that in no long time I shall receive another volume. I should anticipate that as the writers advance towards middle age their letters will grow in interest. Men's letters are generally better in middle age than in youth, at least if they care to write good letters. For I am no believer in the doctrine that the best letters are those which are written with a careless ease. I prefer them written with a skilful ease, thoughtfully, though genially, in the language of life no doubt, and not in the language of literature, but in such a language of life as a man uses when he speaks his best—in his wisest, or brightest, or gayest, or wildest, or most passionate moods. Such language is hardly to

be found in a man's juvenile letters ; we may rather expect to find ambitious attempts. So, when you send me notices of Hugh and Gilbert arrived at the age of the angel Gabriel—that is,

In manhood where youth ends—

(which is the prime of life, is it not ?) I shall expect to meet with larger extracts from their letters.

Aubrey de Vere's book is full of thought, and of genius which could not fail to be felt if he would but exercise his imagination in conceiving the minds to which he addresses himself as well as in evolving his own. But his life has been a soliloquy, and he has talked so long to himself in solitudes and wildernesses of thought, that he often seems as if he understood no other audience. Still, there are many of these poems which must make themselves heard, I should think, across whatever gulf or chasm.

He passed a month or two with us at Bournemouth, looking worn and wasted at first, and as if he had hardly recovered the fasts of the last Lent. After a while we began to see gleams of his former self.

You thought when you saw my handwriting that it was a book by me. Such a book will probably reach you in the next twelve months ;[1] for last winter, after ten years' intermission passed in the belief that I had lost my faculties in that kind, I betook myself to write a play ; and when I left Sheen in April I had proceeded to the end of the third act,

[1] *St. Clement's Eve.*

where it has rested since. Now that I am at home again I hope to resume it, though a full house and an aggravation of my chronic complaints, through catching cold, have checked me hitherto. I like what I have written, but doubt whether this 'worky-day world' will listen to more than one poet at a time.

Good-bye. My letter cannot boast what your 'Notes' certainly may—'the tender grace of not-too-much.'

From Henry Taylor to Miss M—— S——.

East Sheen : January 2, 1862.

You ask what is to be the name of my play, and that is a much-vexed question. It is difficult to say whether a name should be neutral or significant. If significant, it is almost sure to be open to objections and to come wrong to one person or another. If neutral, it is uninteresting. I believe the best thing is to choose a title which sounds well and means little. The date of the catastrophe is St. Clement's Eve (November 22), and by that name (as at present advised) I mean to call the play. It had an audience of James Spedding and John Forster ten days ago. Forster was very civil, Spedding rather silent, and I doubt whether either gentleman was charmed. A reading to Mrs. P—— and E—— F—— seemed more successful, and one to B—— S—— particularly so. But success in private readings, even

when unquestionable, is not much of an indication of what we are to expect in the way of public success, and we should not forget what happened to the late Lord Carlisle's play, which was 'enacted with unbounded applause at the Priory and damned with great expedition at Covent Garden.' I have still some work to do upon it, for Alice condemned the first love-scene, which she found cold and heavy, and I have to rewrite that and to make other little emendations and additions here and there.

God bless you, dear!

From Henry Taylor to Lady Taunton.

The Roost: May 23, 1862.

The 'London has begun' at the end of your note did not chime in very well with the 'Write to me soon' which went before, for what is the use of a letter from the country when London has begun? Nevertheless, as you ask for it, here you have it. I am glad that you took pleasure in Alfred[1] and his reading. I hope you sat up with him over his pipe, for no one knows how agreeable he can be without that experience of him. As to his reading, he is a deep-mouthed hound, and the sound of it is very grand; but I rather need to know by heart what he is reading, for otherwise I find sense to be lost in sounds from time to time; and, even when I do know what the words are, I think more of articula-

[1] Alfred Tennyson.

tion is wanted to give the consonantal effects of the rhythm; for without these effects the melodious sinks into the mellifluous in any ordinary utterance; and even when intoned by such an organ as Alfred's, if the poetry be of a high order, the rhythm so sounded loses something of its musical and more of its intellectual significance. In the best verse not every word only but every letter should speak. Nevertheless, his reading is very fine of its kind, and it is a very rare thing to hear fine reading of any kind.

From Henry Taylor to Dr. John Brown.

The Roost: May 31, 1862.

My dear Dr. Brown,—I have not yet thanked you for your sermons,[1] but I *am* thankful. I had known you before as the Landseer of literature and in divers other capacities, and I am glad to know you now as a preacher to the poor, and, in them and through them, to us all. In reading your little book I could not help feeling, with some regret for the difference of dates, how my old friend Southey would have been delighted with it. No one loved good stories and the pleasantries of wisdom better than he, nor was there any one in whom the humanities and the spiritual sense went more hand in hand.

I entirely go along with you in your protest against the inordinate activities of the present times.

[1] *Health: Five Lay-sermons to Working People.*

I think it was Dr. Baillie, whose advice to take exercise being met by the patient's assurance that 'he had not time for it,' made answer, 'Have you time to die, sir?' But the truth is that such men have not time to live as they ought, leisure being, as much as occupation, one of the moral necessaries of life. To a copy which I have of the 'Regimen Scholæ Salernitanæ' there is appended an old translation with this couplet:

> Use three physicians: first use Dr. Quiet,
> Next Dr. Merriman, and Dr. Diet.

In the first matter a man must be his own doctor. In the second he may be a good deal helped, and I think he is often a good deal hindered; for I have observed that it is the way of many doctors to entertain an anxious patient and his friends with the particulars of the most distressing and appalling case of a similar kind with which their experience has furnished them, or perhaps with the particulars of the worst case of any kind which is now or has been lately in their hands. As to diet, I think a patient, if judicious and unbiassed, may find his own way more or less, taking the presumptive evidence of general experience as adduced by his doctor for a ground to start from. I had more to say, but five folio volumes of evidence of abuses in a hospital and lunatic asylum in Jamaica wait beside me, and I must go to my work.

Believe me, yours very sincerely,

H. Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to James Spedding.

The Roost, Bournemouth : July 15, 1862.

My dear Spedding,—I send you back the 'English Churchman.' Good 'English Churchman,' I am content with him. I have been feeling from time to time as if I had a good deal to say about the two volumes,[1] and I believe I should have said it but for the intrusion of an enormous office *case*, one of the most tedious and laborious I have ever dealt with, which has been occupying me all the summer ; but for this, and but for a sort of hope that you would come down to us for a few days sooner or later, and that I might speak instead of writing. I believe, however, that what I have to say that is worth saying may be put into a few words. On the question of impartiality, I observe that when there is anything which may be construed two ways you point out the more favourable construction and in some sense deliver a judgment ; but that when there is anything which admits of only one construction, and that an unfavourable one, you pass it in silence. You commend what is commendable, at least where it might be supposed to be otherwise, and you do not censure what is censurable. The conjectures which the volumes suggest to me respecting Bacon's character are, that in his personal relations he was, though a kind, a somewhat cold man, his ardours being those of a patriot and a philanthropist ; that neither gratitude

[1] *I.e.* of Spedding's *Bacon*, reviewed by the *English Churchman*.

nor resentment took much hold of him; that he was not averse from indirect dealings, and did not see much harm in them; that in his dealings with his own mind and nature, and in his self-judgments, he was humble, candid, and true; and that he was moderately and temperately worldly-minded. Do you know how many copies you have sold, and whether any of the quarterly journals are going to do their duty in the matter? Ever yours,

H. T.

Note added by James Spedding.

The fact probably is that, when I point out the favourable construction, it is when the thing not only *may* be construed in two ways, but *has been* commonly construed in the unfavourable way, and I think the wrong one. Otherwise it has been my intention throughout to refrain from praise and censure both, and I wonder how it is that people have come to the conclusion that I am an admirer of Bacon's character at all. I have certainly nowhere in this book professed any such admiration as should preclude the supposition that I disapprove of many of his actions, and even dislike many of his qualities. But my business is to tell the story, not to deliver a moral lecture on it.

J. S. July '62.

From James Spedding to Henry Taylor.

July 28, 1862.

My dear Taylor,—The good English Churchman is Dr. Jebb, who being a friend of yours, and otherwise interested in the subject, can hardly be considered an indifferent witness, the effect of the book upon entirely disengaged readers being what I want to know, and with them, not so much whether they approve of it as whether they can read it. Of the notices which I have seen, the most satisfactory to me was that in the 'Daily News,' which I sent you, being the work of a man who had read the book with attention and considered it without apparent prejudice either way, and observed the material points. But altogether I am very well satisfied with the tone of the critics. There has been much less than I expected of indignant rebuke and castigation, and less in the later notices than in the earlier; and in the way of objection there has been nothing which has either any strength in itself or any aptness to make an impression on the popular imagination. So that, if nothing worse comes, the book will stand, and be consulted by those who take a serious interest in the subject, which is all that is of any importance in the matter; if even that be, which I doubt. How people like Bacon when they see him is a question which does not concern me, who merely undertake to show him, and am no way answerable for what he said or

did; no more than a portrait painter is answerable for the character of the faces he paints.

What you say of my way of praising and censuring rather puzzles me, for certainly I intended to abstain from both alike; and I think you will find that where I point out the favourable construction, it is where the thing not only '*may* be construed two ways,' but *has been* commonly construed unfavourably, and thereby in my opinion *mis*construed; and that if I have not done the same in the opposite case, it is because the unfavourable view of all Bacon's actions is familiar to everybody, and some of them have been popularly misconstrued through the overlooking of it. When the thing admits of only one construction I do not understand you to say that I praise it when favourable, and pass it in silence when unfavourable, but only that I omit to point out the unfavourable construction. Why not? When the thing admits of only one construction, whether favourable or unfavourable, what need is there of comment? To discover what Bacon thought about the affairs of his own time is what I profess to aim at; what he did think, not what he ought to have thought. For this it is necessary, no doubt, to examine and understand his words and actions, but not to justify or condemn them. As soon as they are fairly set forth, any man may judge them who feels a call to do so; but my call is to interpret, not to appraise or criticise. In some cases, indeed, I could not give my own interpretation without intimating

my dissent from the popular one, as in his dealings with Essex for instance; but I have avoided such discussions where I could; and of his character generally I am not aware that I have expressed any opinion at all. I have feelings of my own, of course, liking some things, and disliking or regretting others; but I don't know how anybody can find out what I like and what I dislike, as long as I keep these feelings to myself. And though I find to my surprise that the critics generally treat me as a vindicator, an admirer, and an advocate, I don't think they can find anything in these two volumes to justify the imputation, or anything that precludes me from perfect liberty of judgment as to the moral character of any of his actions. Yours ever,

J. Spedding.

From Henry Taylor to James Spedding.

The Roost, Bournemouth: August 5, 1862.

My dear Spedding,—I do not think I spoke of your 'way of praising and censuring,' but what I believe I did speak of, your occasional vindication and alternative silence, is explained by the grounds you now assign—that what was censurable was sure to be duly censured henceforth as it has been heretofore, whilst what was unjustly censured needed justification.

Still I am not surprised (as you are) that when people found you sometimes vindicating and never

condemning, they should have inferred that you were 'a vindicator, an admirer, and an advocate.' And such indeed biographers are commonly assumed to be, because such they commonly are. And for moral judgment to put on dumbness—though I dare say a wise and well-considered course in your case—is so unusual that it is hardly likely to be very well understood.

Alice goes all lengths with Lord Bacon.

As to the Essex question, I recollect James Stephen, on the occasion of a friend of his having been accused of a heinous offence, saying to me that the bond of friendship should not be broken by any offence not thereto relative. Perhaps I agree with him, perhaps not. Perhaps the doctrine bears upon the Essex question, perhaps not.

Ever yours,

H. T.

From Henry Taylor to Miss S——.

The Roost, Bournemouth : August 18, 1862.

The summer has rained itself away since the 8th June, when you wrote to me last, and I have had nothing to say to you, not from want of thoughts turning to youward, but from that want of activity which commonly goes by the name of want of time. As to time, if I have less of it disposable for writing letters than I had a year or two ago, that is from causes you will not object to—one

being that I can now take a walk whenever the day is dry and warm, another that I now no longer sit up in my bed for three or four hours of the night, seldom, indeed, for more than one or one and a half. I still go to bed at eight, but I do not count the sitting up in bed from that hour till half-past ten or eleven in the *night*. My bedroom, by the opening of folding doors, makes itself one with the drawing-room, and a rumour of what is going on there mixes with my readings rather pleasantly. Almost all that I have read this summer has been in bed, for I have had heavy office business to do in the day; and I have done also a reasonable amount of out-door exercise, partly for health's sake, partly because I like it, and partly for the same reason which made it desirable in the case of Kätchen.

The reading I have accomplished is of Spedding's 'Bacon' (vols. i. and ii.) and Carlyle's 'Frederick' (vol. iii.), the first with infinite satisfaction and admiration, the second with as much *amusement* and admiration—great books both, and such as one year has not often brought forth. The defect of Carlyle's is one which belongs to the author, and which I once ventured to mention to him, that he does not know the difference between right and wrong. The deficiency one feels in the other is one which no doubt Jem has his own reasons for—that a just and penetrating moral judgment affects dumbness, and, except in one instance, refuses to have any communication with the readers.

The summer has gone well with us, not through any merits of its own, for it has been a sullen, cloudy, rainy sort of summer here, as elsewhere. But we have been well in health for the most part, and Alice and the children are very fond of the place, and I like it well, though most places are alike to me. Beauty it certainly has in an eminent degree, and there are agreeable people here, as I believe there are everywhere, though the *residents* are few—three dowagers, six old maids, a severe rector, and a mild curate—the latter very handsome and gentlemanly, and said to be strong in fact though soft in manner.

Ever yours affectionately,

H. T.

From Henry Taylor to Sir John Herschel.

The Roost : August 26, 1862.

My dear Sir John,—In addition to your very kind letter about 'St. Clement's Eve,' I have to thank you for the Homeric hexameters. Of their relation to their original I am incompetent, you would hardly believe *how* incompetent, to judge ; but, in themselves, they gave me a far more interesting and vivifying and verifying conception of Homer than previous translations have presented ; and, as a specimen of English hexameters, I know of none so melodious and so various in their melody, unless it be some passages in Southey's 'Vision of Judgment.' But whatever may be the aptitude of the hexameter for

the rendering of a poem in a cognate metre, I doubt whether it will ever strike root downwards and bear fruit upwards in English ground. For, admitting, what it would be impossible to deny against the witness of your hand, the manifold variety of detail which the hexameter may be made to include, there is still the one invariable falling syllable at the close which importunes the ear, and will not permit itself to be forgotten. It is this ever-recurring and importunate cadence which, in my estimation, must always derogate from the claim of the hexameter to rank with blank verse as a measure suited to a long poem ; nor do I know that it can contain any sectional melodies which blank verse may not be made to contain also if competently constructed. But then I think that the competency must be sought (Milton excepted) in the Elizabethan writers of it—not all of them, not Massinger, not Ben Jonson, but in Shakespeare, Fletcher, Ford, Marlowe, and some others. What it was that happened to the English ear after that I know not ; perhaps I may have abandoned my own too exclusively to their music and become insensible or intolerant to what succeeded ; but for more than a hundred years the art of writing anything but the heroic couplet seems to have been lost, which couplet, I confess, it costs me almost an heroic effort to read ; and when our verse ceased to clank this chain, it rose into lyrical movements of some force and freedom, but to me it seems never to have recovered the subtle and searching power and consonantal pith which it

lost in that fatal eighteenth century, when our language itself was dethroned and levelled. The blank verse of Young and Cowper in the last century, or (with the exception of occasional passages) of Southey and Wordsworth in this, is, to my mind, no more like that of the better Elizabethans than a turnpike road is like a bridle path, or a plantation like a forest.

I repeat that my feelings on this subject may be those of a bigot, and my views and tastes wanting in catholicity; but, if so, you will be in no danger of taking them for more than they are worth.

Believe me,

Ever yours sincerely,

H. Taylor.

From Aubrey de Vere to Henry Taylor.[1]

October 30, 1862.

. . . When I speak of my poems as requiring some continuity of attention, I am far from assuming that they need it from profundity or subtlety of thought. They need it from a much humbler reason —because they were, in some cases, artistically constructed, with a hope of embodying a certain large aggregate of thoughts, feelings, and imaginative illustrations naturally in harmony with each other, and so disposed artistically (sometimes by re-

[1] Sir Henry Taylor makes a note on this letter: 'A letter of extraordinary subtlety, and depth, and height, and width, with a curious incapacity of conceiving limitations in the minds of his readers.'

semblance, sometimes by contrast) as to include a large *continuity* of imaginative and philosophical interest. They intended to treat some large subjects with a logical coherency. Thus, my 'May Carols' were not written as separate hymns or poems about the Blessed Virgin, by any means, but were thought out together before they were individually composed. They were intended, each of them, to take up one idea, and only one, and conjointly to illustrate what Catholic divines would sometimes call 'The Theology of Mary'—that is, Christianity with its field contemplated from one especial mountain-top, *as a point of view*, that spot being the doctrine of the Incarnation. There are other such mountain-tops in theology, so high that from them also is presented the whole field of the Christian faith, but presented in a different *perspective* in each case. From each of these summits the whole of religion is contemplated; but the various doctrines composing it assume, by the laws of spiritual perspective, a special aspect of great significance and value, determined by the special point of view. My special point of view I selected on this occasion, partly because it is less raised above the office of poetry by the awfulness of the subject than the kindred mysteries of the Trinity or the Passion, and partly because, from the gladsomeness of the theme (to which the month of May has long since been dedicated in celebration), I was enabled, in treating it, to indicate the mode in which external nature might be interpreted by the Christian religion,

which confesses *God become man*, in opposition to the mode in which she was interpreted by that Pagan theology which regarded Nature herself as divine, eternal, and uncreated, and in which, by a harmony not very occult, a mythology in worship corresponded with Pantheism in philosophy. A little attention, but of a continuous, not broken, character, was necessary, doubtless, to bring out the continuity of the work I had aimed at writing, and in which the results of long years of theological study were embodied. A work of Bossuet's, for instance, had given me the one *idea* presented in one of the poems; another book had helped to one other; hundreds of pages of learning, argument, and eloquence being barren of result for this particular purpose, since my scheme had nothing to do with polemics, and required only that the pure ideas on a particular subject should be collected, appropriately grouped, and poetically illustrated. Yet the main object of the poem seems never to have been observed by its readers, either from being imperfectly brought out by me, or for want of continuous attention on their part; and one of my critics deplored the moral and intellectual stultification of one who could thus endeavour to revive a *quasi* mythology and idolatry. It so happens that some of our best modern poets have really done much to produce a poetical revival of Paganism, as Shelley, Keats, and Landor; and have curiously thus illustrated the connection between mythology and the pantheistic philosophy which our age has more

seriously reproduced. To them I particularly alluded in one of my 'May Carols,' page 53, and pointed out that the only safeguard against such imaginative snares was to be found in the doctrine of the Incarnation *profoundly understood* and *so widely applied* as to anticipate the danger, and cut off at their source those idolatrous tendencies which proceed from ignorance as to the true relations of Nature and Divinity —an ignorance which itself proceeds from ignoring, or feebly grasping, those two great verities, viz. a *creation*, which separates Nature from Divinity, and (the complement of this doctrine) an *Incarnation*, which bridges over the gulf between the finite and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal, through the humanity of Him who (as the Good Shepherd) brought back, like a lost sheep, to the Throne of the Infinite, that creation which (as the Creator) He had called into existence.

> His place, or thine, removed, ere long
> The Bards would push the Sects aside;
> And, lifted by the might of song,
> Olympus stand re-edified.[1]

Not only this poem, but nearly every one in the series had either asserted or implied a philosophy of matter and spirit, exactly the opposite of that of the Greeks, and by which alone I believe that the imagination can be Christianised, religion brought into the sphere of common things, idolatry precluded permanently, and art provided with a pure, legitimate, and

[1] P. 54, edition of 1857.

safe sphere for the exercise of her powers. Nature was represented as 'an arch suspended in its spring' until the Creator had, in His Divine humanity, 'assumed His own creation.' She through whom the promised 'Seed of the Woman' became man is invariably set forth as the chief *created* object of reverence, exclusively from her relations to Him, and because it was only through definitions in which she was necessarily though accidentally included as 'mother of God' (*i.e.* in His humanity), that the early Councils were able to refute and exclude the early heresies against the Incarnation.

> Pronounce the consonant who can
> Without the softer vowel's aid.—P. 7.

To pronounce is to *articulate*. The experience of the first six centuries proved that the doctrine of the Incarnation, when clearly and fully articulated in the human intelligence, involves certain high and reverential doctrines at its two extremities as it were—certain doctrines relating to the Trinity and the Divine Son, on the one hand, and, on the other, to humanity and to Mary. This is the record of the past. If 'The *Circles Twain*'—viz. that of finite things and that of the infinite—do really meet in one point (the Incarnation), then they must meet in one special point of the smaller circle, as well as in one of the larger; and if either of them be forgotten, then the correlative one is not likely to be rightly remembered. Where there are no 'Holy Families,' there will be few road-side crucifixes. This was

the *idea*. Among created things some are higher than others. If you find out the highest as well as the higher, you are not thus tempted to overlook the interval between the Creator and the highest of mere created things; because that is obviously infinite, and incapable, therefore, of being diminished, much less abolished; but, on the other hand, you may thus learn to realise that interval much more than before, just as you may be made vividly to realise the height of the stars above you when you climb the highest hill that is near, though you forget it in the valley below, where stars are hidden by the mist. This is the idea of the 'May Carol,' called 'Turris Eburnea.' Every poem in the series illustrates the same philosophy, which is one consistent philosophy of religion, humanity, art, and nature, as contemplated from a single Christian verity; and it does so, not by controversy, but purely by ideas. No cautious phrases were used or needed. In policy we take the *middle* course; but in setting forth ideas the two opposite extremes that commonly belong to philosophic thought are boldly and separately exhibited; for unless each is fully and clearly grasped, we cannot appreciate the relations of the two or discern the unity in which they are reconciled. My poem did not include any *strong* expressions about Mary which are of a rhetorical character, and yet did not shun the *strongest* that have ever been used when they carried a philosophical idea with them. Now of course I could not quarrel with any one for not

agreeing with my philosophy, or for calling it so much 'bottled moonshine,' as some rhetoricians, falsely supposed to be philosophers, have called Christianity itself. But the odd thing is, that hardly any one has discovered that the poem is a philosophical poem at all, or at least an attempt at being such ; and the infinite stupidity of a *quasi* idolatry has been attributed to it, not only by unfriendly critics but by personal friends, in spite of numberless poems, as well as of the preface, in which the real root and meaning of idolatry is exposed. I can easily imagine a person's not liking the idea gradually developed in the book. His system of theological thought may not *have room* for it. It is only a genuine theism, such as Christendom received by inheritance from the patriarchal world and the days when man walked with God, which can without jealousy afford accommodation beneath its ample roof to the altars raised in honour of God's chief servants. Such a notion of God as might be derived from Paley, or such a notion of our Lord as might be accepted by one who did *not* really accept or fully understand His divinity, might, and I think must, feel itself *jostled* by adequate thoughts of just men made perfect, such notions themselves not belonging in fact to any higher level than that of creaturely excellence. Here, as everywhere, the principle of *proportion* comes in, and to me the solution of the difficulty seems to be found in an exalted and authentic theism (which we can only reach through the doctrine of the

Trinity), and not in depressed views respecting creatures and the greatness which divine grace may communicate to their humility. Others may take quite a different view of all this and think the philosophy of the 'May Carols' illusory; but when I find that even friendly readers entirely miss the meaning of that philosophy, and fancy its principles to be the very opposite of those it maintains, I am again brought to the question, 'how is it that any one can read the book with such a singular lack of attention and coherent continuous thought?' or is the solution of this the circumstance that there is some odd peculiarity in my mind, and that I imagine there is a philosophy in a poem because it was intended to be there—like the painter who took years to paint and retouch a picture, which, when uncovered, exhibited but a canvas idly streaked over with colours.

From Henry Taylor to Aubrey de Vere.

November 28, 1862.

I have considered much and often your letter of the 30th of August, and it rather tends to confirm me in an opinion I have long entertained—that one of the reasons of your unpopularity as a poet is your non-exercise of that preliminary act of the imagination by which a man conceives his audience. Your account of the scheme of meanings in the 'May Carols' appears to me to denote such a want. It may be that from my own slowness and want of

interest in transcendental divinity I exaggerate the inapprehensiveness of others; but I should have thought that to understand all that you say is expressed or adumbrated in the 'May Carols' would have required inspiration, not in the poet only, but in his readers. My own belief is that whatever may be the value of this sort of philosophical theology in itself, it has no vocation to express itself in verse. If it be not unintelligible in prose (which it will be to the many), the concentration of it in poetic forms forbids any such development as would convey it to any but some enthusiastic student of such themes. The philosophy which poetry can convey appears to me to consist chiefly of generalised truths (relating to human life and affections) which can be at once and undoubtingly recognised as the result of a just and penetrating insight. I will exemplify from yourself:

> Vainly heart with heart would mingle,
> For the deepest still is single—

is one example;

> from passionate mood
> Secured by joy's complacent plenitude—

is another. In the wide range of your intellectual field you come across such things from time to time; but the region in which you delight to dwell is that of problematical and disputable truths (or 'ideas' if you will) of which every man will take his own view if he care to take any view at all, and of which no man will be convinced in poetry.

It would be worth while to search out, if one could, the difference between the mystery which has been found more or less attractive in some poetry, and the obscurity which has been found repulsive in other. I do not, myself, know what it consists in ; but perhaps one sort of mysterious poetry which is attractive is that which has relation to some *familiar* mystery of the human mind, which most people look into and no one hopes to penetrate. The absence of any such hope or expectation releases the mind from straining at conclusions and licenses to a sort of luxury of dimness. But in a dogmatic philosophy which claims assent and belief, obscurity is not tolerated.

From Henry Taylor to Sidney Herbert.[1]

March, 1865.

Your speech the other day brought to my recollection a circumstance which I observed some fifteen years ago, when I was at Edinburgh. In consequence of some dog having gone mad shortly before, an order had been issued by the magistrates of the city for all dogs going abroad to be muzzled. The order was

[1] The occasion was this : It had been discovered that Sir James Graham, then in office, had intercepted and opened letters addressed to some political refugees (I forget from what country), and he was assailed with all manner of invectives for so doing. Political reasons made it impossible for him to disclose the grounds of his proceeding.—*H. T.* In thanking Henry Taylor for his letter, Sidney Herbert says : ' I showed it to the muzzled dog himself, who was much amused at it.'

obeyed as the orders of municipal authorities usually are—that is, one half the dogs went about muzzled and the other half unmuzzled. Now it so happened that, owing to some common pursuit in which the dogs of Edinburgh were engaged at the time, frequent differences of opinion occurred between one and another of them, and the thing which attracted my attention (insomuch that I thought it worth while to make a note of it) was that, although there was much fighting amongst the unmuzzled dogs, and much growling and gobbling on all sides, yet in no instance did a dog that was unmuzzled condescend to bite a dog that was muzzled. I thought the fact worthy of being noted down, not only because it was creditable to the dogs, but also because it might be usefully held up as an example to their fellow-creatures.

From Henry Taylor to the Hon. C. Spring Rice.

The Roost : June 30, 1865.

Your disquisitions came upon the heels of Jowett, who has just left us. During one of his former visits I had some talk with him on these subjects, and I told him that, though I held *veracity* to be all-important, I did not hold that truth in the sense of justness of opinion was necessary to be inculcated on all persons at all times ; and if received opinions in the interpretation of Scripture were such as to exercise a benign influence over mankind, I should not

think it right to supplant them unless by opinions which might be expected to exercise an influence more benign. All human opinions in matters spiritual can be only approximately true, and more spiritual truth may be reached by opinions more fallacious, which operate fuller and larger spiritual conceptions, than by opinions less fallacious, which operate more meagre and imperfect spiritual conceptions. The opinions of a child respecting the nature and functions of God will often seem to us ridiculously fallacious, and yet they may help him to a sense of the relations between God and Man, which, in its amplitude and intensity, may comprehend more truth than the adult can attain by the mere eviction of fallacies.

The view Jowett takes, on the other hand, is that the time has come when old fallacies must and will go by the board, and that the thing to be done is to cut them away in such wise that old truths may not go with them.

From Sir Charles Elliot to Henry Taylor.

Plantation House, St. Helena : October 24, 1865.

My dear Taylor,—I have just closed some reports on the defences of this port, and the objects and modes of any military occupation here, according to my understanding of what is needful in these respects. You will judge whether the accompanying 'Notes' should be shown to the Duke of Newcastle or not. They may afford some means of estimating the sound-

ness or otherwise of my reasoning in matters of this kind; that is to say, that the protection of the courses of our great trade and of our outlying possessions is an identical proposition. If our depôts of coal are judiciously distributed, kept well supplied, and securely protected against surprise, all is safe. 'Se no, no.' I hope I may be mistaken in the belief, sedately formed, however, after such opportunities as I have had for seeing and thinking, that we shall not learn the force of this fundamental maxim of policy in such a concern as ours, with great interests scattered over the face of the earth, till it is driven down our throats by a sudden and discreditable blow. We are spending millions in this hopeful project of producing a ship (or what we have the face to call a ship) which is to be invulnerable herself, and, nevertheless, to have the power of sinking any other floating body opposed to her—a thing with the parapet of the solidity of a Gothic cathedral, and a bottom of the thickness of a desirable family kettle; a thing that will not swim in the waters of a large part of the earth, and stir with difficulty in a channel of three miles width. If ever two such monsters as these should really engage in battle (which may be doubted), the conflict would end as Voltaire, with his baboon impudence, said the play of 'Hamlet' did—the whole *dramatis personæ* being dead, the piece naturally concludes. I greatly fear that we are sacrificing the substance for the shadow, neglecting, or indeed totally disregarding, what is vital to our

security, and exhausting our means in a wild-goose chase. The present First Lord of the Admiralty is the ablest man, I think, who has ever filled that post since I can remember, and I do solicitously hope he will soon feel himself strong enough to put an end to all this heedless and ruinous folly. As soon as he can say to all these projectors: 'Gentlemen,—You may build a ship as big as St. Paul's, as invulnerable to shot as the rock of Gibraltar, and with an armament capable of sinking Beachy Head, upon these *sine quâ non* conditions: first, you must convince me that she is to be *perfectly seaworthy*—that is, that she can contend with the state of the sea in its anger round Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope; secondly, that she is *as handy* and *fast* as the Queen's yacht; and, thirdly, that she *can* float on the waters where our occasions call us. For my part (Duke of Somerset still *loquitur*), I have no hope that I can constrain hurricanes, typhoons, and great storms to accommodate their piping to your ideas of gigantic and invulnerable ships; neither can I dispense with the convenience of some reasonable faculty of steerage; and, above all, it is impossible for me to alter the sea coast along the shores of whole continents to meet your requirements.' Whenever the statesman shall be pleased to require that ships *shall be ships*, and turn his serious attention to the right modes of taking care of our trade, there will be an end of a great deal of ruinous nonsense, and a beginning of a good deal of much-needed security. Treaties of peace are but truces—

more or less skilful but unreliable devices, as all great thinkers have agreed, for keeping the hands of the strong needy ruffian off the throat and out of the pockets of the rich and unprepared man; and, for my own part, I never saw a Zouave in France, with his turban and laced jacket, and his face dressed like a he-goat, without the reflection that he was simply a Red Indian in his war-paint, and that if we were not always ready to shoot him down, it might be, at least, steadily depended upon that he was always ready to fall upon our fatlings. I was talking to a witty and cynical French friend of mine at Bordeaux, some years since, about an order of the day of Marshal Canrobert, in taking the command of a division of the army, I believe at Toulouse. The Marshal spoke of the 'héroïques efforts et les *sublimes sacrifices*' of the French army. I said to my friend, 'Heroic fellows they certainly have proved themselves, but 'pour les *sublimes sacrifices*' I did not know what to say; that was a language that seemed to me to be rather more appropriate to the 'noble army of martyrs,' in long white sheets with palms in their hands, than to these smart Zouaves, with red breeches capacious enough to stow a pig in one pocket and a sheep to balance it in the other, with one arm round a pretty girl's neck and a handsome bundle of 'valuables' under the other arm. My friend laughed and said that was true; 'mais, quand on s'adresse à l'armée, il faut y mettre des formes.' But here am I rambling away amongst military politics and

Zouaves, and the like, quite forgetting to tell you that this island must, I think, have been visited by old Shakespeare's spirit. Indeed, where was it not? It is Prospero's own domain—an outside as rough as a bear, the inside (air and all) beautiful exceedingly. Calibans, Trinculos, drunken sailors are here in plenty. As for Mirandas, every man carries his own about within his imagination, if he has got such an article, and she is to be found nowhere else at all. . . .

Affectionately yours,

C. E.

P.S.—I have your photograph (in duplicate) on each side of my looking-glass in my own room, so that my thoughts are with you every day, and always, dear old friend, with great affection. Some feelings strengthen as we grow older. You do not look exactly as you did when you and I read the MS. of the two final acts of 'Philip Van Artevelde' over the cheesemonger's shop in South Audley Street. But it is well as it is, and God grant that you may keep so till we meet again. I came here with the hope that I should have nothing to do—'Il n'en est rien.' I have been hard at work ever since I have been here, with no pleasure in my work, but toiling on as well as I know how.

From Henry Taylor to Miss S——.

East Sheen, London, S.W. : December 2, 1865.

Your letter falls pleasantly into the first little bit of leisure I have had for some days. Yesterday I began my day's work at half-past four in the morning, the day before at a few minutes after five, and the days in Downing Street have been harassing, as the mixture of talking and discussing with writing always is to me. Now I hope to have some slackening till the next Jamaica mail arrives. I wish Jamaica were farther off and you nearer, but a letter is something. I am very anxious about this Governor Eyre. It was I who advised his appointment three or four years ago, not knowing so much of him then as I have since learnt from his service in Jamaica, but knowing enough of him to think he was the best man then available for stopping a gap in the Government whilst the Governor (Sir C. Darling) was at home on leave. It so happened that Sir C. Darling was sent to Victoria in two years, and by that time Eyre had proved himself an able administrator and was appointed full Governor. Whatever he has done, I feel sure was done with a cool judgment and a conscientious sense of duty. He has generously taken it upon himself to approve what had been done by others, and thus involved himself in a responsibility which he might have escaped. It is a dreadful misfortune to any man to have fallen upon such a sort of service as he and the officers acting

under him have had to perform ; but I dare say he feels it to be a compensation that he has saved the colony from a general massacre of the white and mixed races, and is quite unconscious of the view which may be taken by the public and the press in this country. By this time it will have dawned upon him.

From Aubrey de Vere to Henry Taylor.

Mount Trenchard : Christmas Day, 1865.

I wonder how you can have found time or had patience, immediately after the terrible labours you have had in connection with Jamaica, to write me the long and interesting letter I have this day received from you. That part of it in which you speak of the great difficulty of getting a good tragic theme, and the circumstance that you did not find either of the two suggested to you by Macaulay or Lord Aberdeen satisfactory as a whole, suggests something to me which I had better mention before it goes out of my head. My father used to say that the essence of a Greek play did not consist in the chorus, or in anything exclusively Greek in its character, but in the fact that it was the *fifth act* of a play the rest of which was left unwritten, and supplied only by the imagination. He maintained that any one who wrote an English dramatic poem on this principle, imagining the first four acts, and then carefully writing the fifth and letting that stand by itself, would produce a

noble poem, different both from a drama and a mere dramatic scene, superior to the former in intensity, and to the latter in fulness. He thought of writing the death of Queen Elizabeth himself in this way, maintaining that no finer subject could be found in history for such a dramatic poem, although it would not furnish materials for a drama in five acts. Now what occurs to me is that if you were, when once more at leisure, to take either that subject or either of the two suggested to you by Lord Macaulay or Lord Aberdeen, you could with comparatively little labour produce a magnificent poem. The real difficulty in the drama consists in the length of the plot you have to weave together, and this would be avoided.

Mere dramatic scenes often make beautiful poems; your 'Alwyn and Adelais' is an example, and Landor's 'Parents of Luther' ranks amongst the best things he ever did. But a fifth act—that is, a dramatic poem including the whole crisis—would be a far nobler thing, possessing a unity and an extraordinary intensity.

Dealing with a complete drama, it strikes me that the poet can hardly, till he gets near the end, be certain that nothing will go wrong as regards his theme, just as a sculptor cannot be sure that he will not work down into some black mark, to the detriment of his marble. This part of the matter seems to me so much a matter of luck that I hardly hold the dramatist responsible for it.

From Henry Taylor to Earl Grey.

East Sheen, S.W. : April 10, 1866.

Dear Lord Grey,—I am much obliged to you for sending me your speech on Ireland. It is a subject on which I am not particularly well-informed, but, as far as I can venture to have an opinion, I concur in your main purposes, though not altogether in your fourth resolution. I think that there should be neither more nor less than an adequate provision for the Anglican and Presbyterian clergy, and I think that there should be neither more nor less than an adequate provision for the Roman Catholic clergy ; and I think that the interests of existing Protestant clergy should be saved. But your fourth resolution, as I understand it, does not rest absolutely upon the principle of adequacy combined with the principle of saving existing interests. For the effect of it is that, as existing interests fall in, additions shall accrue to the common fund disposable for partition. Hence it follows that either that fund is to be less than adequate at first, or will be made more than adequate afterwards. This paring of principle to fit in with circumstance might not be what would amount to a really solid objection to the measure in its practical operation, if it were a measure not connected with feelings and controversies ; but I think that it is generally fatal to a measure which *is* so connected. What I should prefer would be to determine the fund required to make neither more nor less than adequate

provision for the ecclesiastical establishment of each creed—say at the rate of 100*l.* a year for each thousand of the Roman Catholic population, and at 250*l.* for each thousand of the Protestant population, and transfer to your Commissioners the property of the Irish Church, together with such a sum from the Consolidated Fund as would enable them to make an adequate apportionment on the prescribed basis. And I would deal with the existing interests of the Anglican clergy separately by a grant of life annuities representing the difference between a permanent adequate provision for the incumbencies and the actual incomes received.

When I suggest the rate of 100*l.* and 250*l.* as the respective adequate provision for each thousand of the Roman Catholic and Protestant populations, I have reference not only to the difference between a married and a celibate clergy, but also to the different grouping of the two populations, which must often occasion a large proportionate expense for a small Protestant congregation.

With respect to your general views of Ireland and the Irish, in these, too, I agree in the main ; but I am afraid I hold the very opinion you regard with disgust. I think that the faults of the British Government in governing Ireland have been great ; but I think that they have been greatly owing to the faults of the Irish character. I think that if Ireland had been peopled by English or Lowland Scotch, she would not and could not have been so misgoverned

as she has been. I think that the Irish are, no doubt, as you say, 'entitled to the same measure of justice and the same regard for their wishes and feelings as we claim for ourselves'; but I do not think that equal justice means identical laws, or that the same laws are likely to be adapted to promote the welfare of races so totally opposite in character as the English and Irish. I think that the Irish are, in some of the most essential qualities which lend themselves to good government, an inferior race. That is no reason why they should not have the best government which is possible for such a people; but it goes far to explain why they have had such a bad government. I do not say with Walter Savage Landor,

> Fling far aside all heed
> Of that hyæna race whose growl and smiles
> Alternate, and which neither blows nor food,
> Nor stern nor gentle brow domesticate.

On the contrary, I would give all the more heed to the task of governing them, as the task is more arduous and the evil to be subdued more inveterate. But I would certainly not recognise them 'in all respects as our equals.' We English are bad enough—a rather odious people in my estimation. What people is not? But in some important particulars we are superior to the Irish, and especially in those particulars which come in aid of good government. In some other particulars, *they* are, I think, superior to *us*; but that is not saying much.

When I say that the difficulties which have

opposed themselves to good government in Ireland would not have arisen if Ireland had been peopled by Englishmen or Lowland Scotchmen, it may be answered, perhaps, that Englishmen and Scotchmen are not Roman Catholics, and that the difference of religion has been the chief source of the difficulties. But my belief is that it is because the race was inferior that it remained unreformed in its religion; and is it not the fact that throughout Europe the superior races either went with the Reformation, or, if kept back by political circumstance, at least very much modified their Roman Catholicism? A corrupt religion is quite as powerful with an inferior race as a pure religion with a superior race—perhaps (unfortunately) more so; and whilst it is to the credit of the Irish that they are ardent in their corrupt religion, the fact that it *is* corrupt must be taken to indicate the inferiority of the race morally and intellectually. I do not add *spiritually*, because I believe the Irish to be a more devout people than the English, and more devotion with more superstition may be better, spiritually, than less of both.

For this and the next session I suppose that Parliament will be occupied with something else than either Ireland or Jamaica. It may be well for Jamaica that this is so; but I quite agree with you that Ireland needs to be attended to.

Believe me yours sincerely,

H. Taylor.

From Earl Grey to Henry Taylor.

13 Carlton House Terrace, S.W. : April 14, 1866.

My dear Taylor,—Many thanks for your letter. Perhaps the settlement you suggest for the Church question might be more strictly correct in principle than mine, but I think the latter would have practical advantages, which, however, it is hardly worth discussing, as it has no chance of being adopted. I quite agree with you that the Irish are now a very inferior people to the English or Scotch ; whether from race, or from the effect of centuries of misgovernment is doubtful ; but, granting the inferiority in fact, having admitted them to the privileges of a free Constitution, it is perfectly clear that they can only now be governed on the principle of being treated as completely our equals. Of course this does not imply that the laws of the two countries must be in all perfectly the same (the laws of England and Scotland are very different on many points), but that legislation must proceed upon the supposition of an equality of rights and of advantages being enjoyed by the two peoples.

Yours very truly,

Grey.

From Henry Taylor to the Hon. Mrs. E. Villiers.

The Roost : July 16, 1866.

Dearest Mrs. Edward,—The account of the operation rather gave me a shock, but it is over, and I hope that poor —— will not have much more to suffer. She has looked so supremely happy whenever I have seen her this year that one cannot be reconciled to anything that hurts her ; it seems odd and wrong. But certainly one finds more fault with what runs counter to the happiness of the happy than with what goes along with the misery of the miserable. The former, to be sure, is a reverse, and the latter only an aggravation ; but still, in reason, it would seem that the most of suffering should have the most of pity. Perhaps it may be that pity is designed by Providence to be only occasional, not persistent ; affording an impulse to give aid in an emergency, and intended when it has done its work to go away, and indeed to get out of the way of other things ; and thus, when people go on being miserable and cannot be helped, they cease to be pitied. For myself, I should never desire to be pitied except to some purpose. If I were to lose a leg I should like to be pitied, provided that in pursuance of the pity something were tossed into my hat.

I spent four days in London under high pressure, doing what I could to be of use in the bewilderment which attends the first weeks of a new Minister. Lord Carnarvon is the twenty-second Secretary of

State under whom I have served. I have a respect for his character, his zeal, and his industriousness, and for the last two years I have been busying myself in an endeavour to bring to bear upon Colonial prisons the very valuable results of his labours for the reformation of our prisons at home. I have no doubt he will do all he can for the welfare of the Colonies; but I look at his body, and it seems slightly constructed for a man who is to carry a burthen. Besides seeing him, my principal business in London was to make the acquaintance of Sir John Grant, the new Governor of Jamaica. It does not answer me to see *much* of people on business; and as my work may be regarded as given almost gratuitously (for after between forty and fifty years of service I might retire on almost full salary), I am in a position to take my work in the way which suits me best, and I shut myself up and work hard enough at home, but see mighty little of the Colonial Office. Nevertheless, when one has to read a man's despatches for six years to come (or as many of those years as one may live and work), it is convenient to have a look at him; and I went to dine at Sir J. Grant's for the purpose, and I found him in what the house agents call a 'spacious mansion,' with glowing pictures on the walls, presenting divers interesting objects without clothes. And I found flesh in a variety of other exquisite forms upon the dinner-table, and he looked a tall, large, solid, substantial man, with a russet face expressing ease and comfort; and I asked him what

could induce him to leave all this and 'live laborious days' in Jamaica. His answer was, 'I cannot tell you, for I do not know. When I came from India three years since I found my leisure altogether delightful, and came to the conclusion that what I was made for was to swing upon a gate. I have seen no reason to think otherwise since, and why I am going to Jamaica I cannot understand.' I hear he was infinitely laborious as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and that he is one of the few men to whom idleness and labour are equally welcome. His wife was there, and there were daughters—one, a Mrs. Strachey, evidently very clever; and a clever, forward, impertinent schoolboy of fourteen—very taking. I slept there that night; the next at Frederick Rogers's; the third at Frederick Pollock's (whose wife is a new friend of ours—soft and bright); breakfasted on Jamaica with Lord Carnarvon; paid a visit to poor Lady Hislop, who has lost her favourite brother, Edward Elliot; and sped back hither on the fourth day.

——'s fortune is to be paid in this week, and, except building or buying houses, we do not know what to do with it. We are conversant with that and Consols, but with nothing else. I think Consols is a good old creature, and would take care of one's money and give one no trouble; and I hate all trouble and transactions about money, and when they come upon me I sigh and say or sing to myself—

> He that hath nothing
> Hath nothing to care for.

But —— thinks that Consols is an old dowdy, and, though the old dowdy may be as good to her as the good Samaritan and give her twopence to carry her on her way, she thinks that is not enough ; and I believe she will continue to think so till she has fallen among thieves, and after that she will probably think that the good old dowdy's twopence was worth having.

It is long since I have written so long a letter. They used to be thick and many ; but as our autumn comes on—or rather in my case goes on—there is nothing that drops sooner than a correspondence ; not, I think, because one is colder, only because one is older. God bless you, dear!

Ever yours affectionately,

H. T.

From Henry Taylor to Miss S——.

East Sheen : December 10, 1866.

Your aunt has been writing to your mother, it appears, about the dangers of a residence in Ireland under existing circumstances. I have no special means of judging what the amount of danger may be, but I suppose the Government has ; and I should say that, if there is need of gunboats in the Shannon, women and children would be better elsewhere than on its banks. There may not be *much* danger of commotion at any one particular place, but I suppose there must be some little at every place, and those who have no part to perform on such occasions would

seem to have no adequate motive for running even small risks. One would naturally suppose that the best measure of the danger would be taken by persons acquainted with the country and present on the spot; but I do not feel sure that these men are the most certain to be right. I have had more or less knowledge of the details of insurrections for the last thirty or forty years in Jamaica, British Guiana, St. Vincent, and elsewhere ; and when I had occasion to write about the Jamaica insurrection of October 1865, I had this to say of what I had observed—that the local authorities had to find their way amongst two or three different kinds of false lights : first, the man who was carried away by panic; second, the man who piqued himself on being imperturbable; and, third, the man who, seeing all external things about him looking much as he had seen them look ever since he was born, could not believe that anything particular was going to happen. On the occasion of the Jamaica affair in 1865, amongst the scores of letters which I had to read addressed by local magistrates and others to the Government, the panic-stricken man was the rare exception, as well as I could judge from the style. The letters were for the most part dry and calm. If the custos and magistrates of St. Thomas-in-the-East had taken alarm, as they ought to have done, in time, the outbreak could have been easily prevented. The signs of danger were manifest enough ; but they could not believe in it. As to the Irish, what is known with

certainty would be otherwise so incredible, that one is put upon one's guard against incredibility. In one part of Ireland or another I suppose it is not unlikely that some acts of folly and ferocity will be committed. If it should be on a sufficient scale, the public feeling in England and amongst some classes in Ireland will be changed, and it will be once more thought right to execute for high treason. Then perhaps a state of tranquillity will follow.

If the Fenians should drive Mount Trenchard to England, you would fall to my share, I hope; and in that case I should feel indulgent and not advise that more of them should be hanged than may be necessary for public purposes.

From Mrs. Pollock[1] *to Henry Taylor.*

59 Montague Square, W. : January 21, 1867.

My dear Mr. Henry Taylor,—I enclose a lecture of Tyndall's which it will interest you to read, and which I wish much that you could have heard and seen. The subject of 'sounding and sensitive flames' is full of wonder and of poetry. To know that such things are, through the medium of a credible person's narrative, is interesting; to take them in with all your own senses, to feel the life of such strange facts, and to find yourself in close communion with their operations and their development of Nature's laws, is marvellous.

These flames, delicate, bright, tender, feminine in

[1] Now Lady Pollock.

aspect, and I may say in behaviour, seem endowed with human characteristics. Some poet has said somewhere of women, 'Their spirits are to ours as flame to fire.' The gentleman who said it should have witnessed the palpitations, the exaltations, and the depressions; the exquisite sensibilities, the visible pulsations, the flutterings and faintings of the spirits which Tyndall invoked on Friday night. The most tender of them responded to his lightest breath at last; was sensitive to every soft sound he uttered; lifted up its head to listen; dipped and rose and turned to look on him; and, like the affectionate lady in the Scotch song, found music in the very creaking of his boots and throbbed in time to their strides. It was very pretty to see the demeanour of the creature while he repeated to it one of Spenser's most melodious stanzas; how it seemed to listen and love, picking out the sounds specially pleasing to its instincts, and bowing to their beauty. It addressed itself to motion as about to speak, but would not speak; it only reflected with a gentle movement what it heard, as you sometimes see poetry which you recite given back to you by the shifting expression of a sensitive countenance. You are familiar with such indications as these in a soft feminine audience; but can you imagine talking with such effect to a flame out of a gas-pipe? It was not so pretty, but it was quite as wonderful, and it was comical too, to see the spirit bristle up at the call of the whistle, and stir at the tinkle of the distant bell.

From Mrs. Pollock to Henry Taylor.

59 Montague Square, W. : March 29, 1867.

I am rather in a hurry to transport you to the House of Commons, where, owing to the kindness of Laurence Oliphant, I heard last Tuesday's debate. It would have been hardly possible to come upon a better night. Disraeli and Bright spoke in such a way that the evening left upon me an impression of interest, of that vivid and exalted kind which only a very few things are capable of producing, which used to attach to our national drama when Macready's intellect directed it, but which the stage of the present day does not even aim at. A very long-winded man, named ——, I think, preceded Bright, and exhibited the heroism of stupidity in persevering against all the odds of evident weariness and loud inattention ; and it was curious to see the immediate change from a negligent, impatient posture in the House, to one of great eagerness at the first sound of Bright's voice; an eagerness which only Disraeli's impenetrable face was wholly free from. No man ever succeeded better than he does in the assumption of utter insensibility. While Bright flung his taunts at him not a muscle moved ; there he sat with his lower jaw dropped, and his eyes glassy and stiff ; maintaining the same listless look when he was described as 'issuing flash political notes which would not pass at the bank, however they imposed upon the inexperienced ;' and when he was pointed at by Bright's

finger, directing the attention of the House to his attitude, 'Look at the right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer—look at him! Is he not a marvel of cleverness to have led that party so long and to mislead it at last, as he is doing now?' All eyes following this, with a great deal of laughing, had no effect in stirring the Sphinx outwardly, and I don't think so much as an eyelash gave way. It is this dead calm which lashes Gladstone into such passionate vehemence when he attacks Dizzy.

It is certain that Disraeli rose with the feeling of the House against him; but the wonderful dexterity, the wit, the exquisite pleasantry, and the excellent temper of his speech turned it quite round to him and saved the Ministry. The speech was not very well reported in the 'Times.' Some of its happiest turns were missed. Gladstone, who has not the art of veiling his feelings, was undoubtedly much amused throughout, and laughed at all the best hits. He does not always laugh when Dizzy is ironical. The merriment was universal when Disraeli inadvertently spoke of Gladstone as the 'Chancellor of the Exchequer.' Disraeli could not think what the laughing meant, till Mr. Walpole whispered to him, and then he said, in his light, airy way, 'Oh, I find I have made a mistake, and I can only hope I have not done it in the spirit of prophecy.' His speech ended with a peroration about duty and self-sacrifice, which was better acting than is to be had at most of our theatres; and when he sat down, in the midst of

loud and universal applause, I felt that he was a *major miracle*, and quite as remarkable in his performance as any Japanese top-spinner.

From Mrs. Pollock to Henry Taylor.

59 Montague Square, W. : June 17, 1867.

I have heard the song and like it. You will not hold me bound to say (for 'comparisons are odorous') which of the two compositions I prefer ; another verse would no doubt improve both ; for music requires some reiteration to impress itself upon the most sensitive ear, and the melody should be as vivid as a flash of lightning to admit of so rapid a transit as it makes in this case ; I ought to say that I feel Mrs. Frere has been most skilful in dealing with this difficulty, though I would rather not feel it. But too short is better than too long, if we could but remember it always ; and we should lay up in our minds that Spanish proverb, which only reaches me in its French garment—'Tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe ;' in which the last phrase must be accepted as the consolation for the first. The danger in pushing such a theory to its end would be that we should be driven at last to assume that nothing is better than anything, and so reach the conclusion of the Turk : 'It is better to walk than to run, it is better to stand than to walk ; it is better to sit than to stand, it is better to lie than to sit ; it is better to sleep than to lie, it is

better to die than to sleep.' By-the-by, the Spanish novel, 'Gaviota' ('Sea Gull'), which I have just reviewed for Mr. Froude, gives interesting pictures of Spanish peasant life, enriched with a poetry which is due partly, perhaps, to the sympathy with the supernatural bound up with their religious faith, and partly to the susceptibilities of the Southern blood, and which is quite unlike anything in English rustic life. The national characteristics seem to disappear in the conventionalities of polite society, and the drawing-room existence exhibited in the same novel is vapid enough. Indeed, judging from this specimen, the society of London has much more animation in it of a profitable kind than that of Seville; but it may be that we are especially lucky in our own immediate sphere, and that dulness does abound in some circles even of this metropolis.

Poor Carlyle! I thought him looking ill when I was last with him, about ten days ago, and I think his mind turns too much upon itself. He could talk of nothing but the iniquity of the shoemaking trade. He had suffered from the torture of the boot (that favourite torture of James II.), and his little toe was in a miserable condition. He talked of it tenderly and sorrowfully, summing up with this sentence, that 'there was no remedy for this intolerable evil, this great shoemaking sham, but the immediate intervention of the great axe, and that a general decapitation, swift and sure, of all shoemakers was the only remedy for the persecuted shoewearers.' On this,

I reminded him that in 1793 Robespierre did send to the guillotine a wretched tailor for making his coat-sleeves too short; but he pretended not to hear me, for he was unwilling to be diverted from his own particular grievance.

From Henry Taylor to Sir F. Rogers.[1]

East Sheen: February 23, 1868.

What you say of your position in relation to your ancestors of the Fifth Monarchy reminds me of a difference of opinion between James Spedding and myself as to filial duty. I was maintaining that in certain cases it was a reprehensible weakness in the son and heir of a deceased spendthrift father to pay his father's debts. Spedding's answer was a very good specimen of his style: 'Well, I am of the Shem and Japhet way of thinking.'

I was reading John Rogers at seven o'clock this morning when the pouch arrived with your letter. For my own part, I rather admire old John, but I had imagined that Carlyle would be intolerant of him. Carlyle himself is the only man I ever saw who seemed to me to answer to the notion of a Puritan of the seventeenth century—that is, in his nature and character of mind (not, of course, in his creed, if he has one); a man who renounces argument and reasoning which every other intellectual man of the time thinks it necessary to stand upon, and trusts to

[1] Now Lord Blachford.

visions and insights. And the strange thing is that this anachronism of a Carlyle should be popular and captivate minds of all classes. Perhaps it is because he is the only such anachronism, and people are tired of appeals to their reason, specially those who have not got much of it.

From Aubrey de Vere to Henry Taylor.

Curragh Chase: March 3, 1868.

Weeding among old letters does, indeed, make us feel that the past is full of ghosts; but ghosts differ in their classes as much as the other spirits, black, white, and grey; and the ghost which you sent me in the form of a recollection of 1844 is, indeed, a 'spirit of noonday.' Everything that belongs to old days wears for me a magical brightness, and a colouring like that of mountains a little before sunrise. You see I do not say a 'little after sunset.' On the contrary, although there is a melancholy about the past, still the best scenes it presents to our memory somehow seem to me presented even more to one's hope. They are less records of what was than pledges of what may be, and therefore must be, in that far future that alone makes either present or past intelligible. One knows, looking back on them, that somehow they were not all that they seem to have been, or rather that, though they were all, and more than all, yet they were not either felt aright or understood aright at the moment. To-day I can smell the

sea odours mixed with those of the rich vegetation along the Riviera, and see how that radiant land and divine climate brightened up my fellow-travellers; to-day I can take my stand with you under the huge arch of the old Roman bridge at Narni, and observe how intensely you appreciated Italian scenery and how thoroughly you approved of mountains that know how to keep their distance. But still one knows that an actual present always has its 'fly in the compost of spices.' I remember my vexation at Alice's getting ill as the carriage wound up the steep hill of Perugia, and the strange touch of grief I felt at observing for the first time what looked like a solid tress of grey in your hair as you stood before me at church in Naples. Consequently, I think it best to conclude that those old times, compared with which later times seem so beggarly, were chiefly to be valued as omens of some excursion we shall make 'among the palms of Paradise,' if ever we have the luck to get there.

Then, again, I have another quarrel with the past. I do not know how far my case is that of all or most; but while I find I have been very well-behaved towards my acquaintances, and not unfriendly to my outside friends, and fully intended to be magnanimously forgiving to my enemies, if any such had kindly turned up; on the other hand, as regards my nearest friends, though it is very pleasant to feel grateful to them, it is not so pleasant to feel nothing but self-reproach on one's own account.

Whether that uncomfortable feeling is provoked by acts or omissions, still it is almost the only feeling I have ; and I suppose I am quite as well skilled as my neighbours in the graceful art of self-flattery. In this case all that remains to self-flattery is the hope that the odious or 'seasonable' remorse in question proceeds in some degree from having always had a lofty ideal of friendship, such as once made me write a sonnet called 'False Friendship,' by which I meant the friendship of almost all friends. I believe I should have often been burthening my friends with my contrition, only that I did not suppose they would enjoy it or be the better for it. So it only remained for me charitably to hope that others bear the same burthen.

Speaking of sonnets, I have been writing a great many of late. Also I wrote a long ode, partly for your sake, and partly for my sister's. She passed a fortnight here in the autumn ; and my ode is called an 'Autumnal Ode.' It is intended to be a description of autumn, corresponding with the description of spring in my 'Ode to the Daffodil,' which I wrote solely out of 'reverence for your blame,' as you said I never described Nature. In order that you might read it in print, I sent it last month (and for no other object) to the editor of 'Macmillan.' If he should publish it this month, or rather the 1st of May, pray read it. It is intended, over and above the descriptive part, to maintain a great truth, the converse of that so magnificently put forth by Words-

worth in his glorious 'Vernal Ode.' He affirms that the cyclical revolutions of Nature make time an image of eternity, and might tempt the angels down among earth's 'sweet *vicissitudes* to range.' But the converse is no less true—viz. that man was made for eternal things, and that consequently the most beautiful changes have in them something unsatisfactory to him.

I have been hard at work in my hermitage here, writing a great deal more on the great political question that has come for solution than it is likely that I shall publish. I have fought a great battle against the 'secularisation' of Church property, a principle which, if it begins its devastations in Ireland, will soon begin them in England, and lamentably help on the Revolution—that is, the insensible Americanising of our institutions. It is strange to me to see how insensible to this danger are many whose aversion to the cause of 'the North' in the American war was certainly not unconnected with their hatred of American institutions, and whose swaggering language, so deeply resented by America, has largely contributed to bring about the Fenian difficulty. I had brought over many of the Irish bishops to my side, and all would have been at it if Lord Russell's pamphlet had come out a year sooner. His opposition to Lord Grey's motion was his greatest mistake since the Ecclesiastical Titles Act. I consider that I have seen a nation completely lose its head on three occasions—England at the time of the 'Papal Aggression,'

and again at that of the American struggle, and Ireland now in her stupid enthusiasm for secularisation.

From Henry Taylor to Sir Charles Elliot.

The Roost, Bournemouth : June 12, 1868.

The point in Eyre's case which the party opposed to him seem to me to overlook is that the suppression of the outbreak of St. Thomas-in-the-East was not to be reasonably regarded as the end of the danger. In the despatch in which he notified that the district was safe, he added, 'indeed far safer than any other part of the island ;' and he continued to represent the parts of the island in which insurrection had *not* broken out as in a highly dangerous condition. What degree of severity in dealing with local insurgents was necessary to avert the general danger was the question, and it was a question on which several opinions were sure to arise after the fact. You and I may well be of opinion that less severity would have sufficed, without attributing the more severity to a want of regard for human life.

I am not sure, however, that I can agree with the 'Spectator' in the position implicitly assumed in the article you send me, that the value of human life is identical in all races, civilised or barbarous. Some of the uncivilised races do not set the same value on their own lives that we do on ours. A Consul in

Porto Rico gave us a singular account the other day of the manner in which Chinese immigrants in the island were more or less saved from ill-usage by their employers. If a Chinaman thinks himself ill-used he cuts his own throat, thereby inflicting a penalty upon his employer equal to the sum paid for his importation. Men who have no great value for their own lives cannot be deterred from desperate courses by the same amount of severity which will suffice to deter others. Nor does the sacrifice of unvalued life involve the same amount of suffering. Perhaps the greatest suffering occasioned by the destruction of a life of a high order consists in the sorrow and distress of relatives and friends. I believe that as you descend in the scale the suffering thus occasioned is more light and transitory. I think, therefore, that there may be some reasonable ground at the bottom of that estimate of negro life as compared with English life which the 'Spectator' charges upon the middle classes of this country as if it were a pure and unquestionable prejudice.

It has always seemed to me that the party opposed to Eyre afforded in themselves an example of setting a totally different value upon life in one class as compared with life in another. The one life of Gordon, an educated man and member of Assembly, unlawfully sacrificed, seemed to weigh more in their estimation than a hundred meaner lives. So perhaps it ought; but not according to their principles. But if Gordon's life was of more value than the lives of

negroes, on the other hand his death was of immeasurably greater value. What I have always wished that Eyre had done was to execute Gordon, lawfully or unlawfully, and then to let off all the negroes remaining to be tried, except the ringleaders.

All the hundreds who went from Stoney Gut to Morant Bay with the intention to massacre the whites, and were present at the massacre, were no doubt both legally and morally guilty of murder; and those who joined them afterwards with similar intentions were morally guilty of murder and legally guilty of high treason; but I think the mass of them should have been regarded as men carried away by the stream, and not guilty in the sense in which men singly and individually committing murder are guilty.

From Henry Taylor to the Hon. Mrs. Edward Villiers.

East Sheen: January 24, 1869.

If Mentone should remind you of the past, still more would Nice. I wish I had your elasticity and natural courage. I am fond of the past, but afraid of it; it is so full of ghosts now. In the last two or three years I have shrunk from going on with my Autobiography, which I had begun two or three years before that, and brought down to about the twenty-seventh year of my age. I am now almost entirely occupied with business, to the exclusion of reading books as well as of writing them. My day begins about half-past five or six o'clock (for I go to bed

early and never work in the evening). All the reading I get is between that time and half-past seven, when the post comes in with my daily pouch. I begin with poetry, and I read last month C. Tennyson Turner's 'Sonnets,' than which there are none in the language more beautiful in their sincerity and truth; and this month I have been reading Robert Lytton's 'Chronicles and Characters.' They belong to a generation in which there is a great deal of thinking for thinking's sake. They are not less than wonderful in the display of intellectual and imaginative power.

From Henry Taylor to Sir Charles Elliot.

East Sheen: March 27, 1869.

After so long a time that I have seen neither you, dear old Charles, nor your detestable old handwriting, I cannot see the latter without finding it pleasant to behold, however inscrutable, nor without desiring to forget crimes and criminals, and think of personal matters only (if personal matters when you and I are in question can be considered exclusive of crimes and criminals). Many things have happened since we have had anything to say to each other, and what happens at our time of life is apt to be what one would not wish to happen; but there are some things of the other kind, and I hope and believe Frederick's marriage is one. Frederick's way of speaking of the lady is for the most part in the elderly-rational tone, but perhaps rather studiously so, indi-

cating a determined purpose not to be ridiculous. Nevertheless there is a rift in the grey skies now and then, and a beam comes through, and, under the disguise of describing the climate and scenery of Algiers, something is said of Paradise and of things celestial. As to his retirement from the Colonial Office, if his life had been wholly given to business I should have had some doubts of the wisdom of the step ; but though I believe he was always active in business, and now and then perhaps laborious, and what little I had seen of his work seemed to me even better executed than when I knew more of it in years long past ; yet he was not a little occupied with other things, and if a wife can supply the place of business and everything else he will be much the better for his marriage. And there is another event to take pleasure in—the publication of Nina's book [1] and its unquestionable success. No success could be better deserved, for, with one exception, I know no book of the kind which is written with so much judgment and felicity, nor any which has so much of grace and charm ; and however much of the grace and charm may be due to the subject, there is much also which is due to the hand that handles it. The other book of the kind which I should place on a level with it is the Memoir of Mrs. Trench (or Mrs. St. George, as she was called in the first edition). But that had the advantage (a supreme one to me, as you know), of having a woman for the object of interest and

[1] The Countess of Minto's.

admiration. In talking to N—— three weeks ago of your father as he appears in her book, she said to me what I had been saying once and again to others, that you were the person in whom he seemed to be reproduced, and that the resemblance was constantly coming out.

As to crime, I agree in all you say, whether in your letter or in your printed papers. What the Government is doing will not satisfy either you or me. This Habitual Criminals Bill is little more than an extension of the policy of supervision, with some slight increase in the severity of punishments by adding to their duration. It is better than doing nothing. If it succeeds in checking crime to any material extent, we shall be more or less satisfied. If not, the Government and the country will be led to perceive what I believe to be the truth, that the policy of supervision is an ineffective policy, and they may be brought to get upon more solid ground. The policy of punishment, which in my estimation must be resorted to at last, is founded upon a fact in human nature which seems to have been but little recognised in our penal legislation—that men are afraid of immediate and paulo-post-future severities, and not with any added fear of dawdling punishments prolonged into the far distance. Visit them, therefore, with the lash, and the tread-wheel, and the spare diet, and the plank bed for one year; but do not condemn them to these things or to any of them for five or ten years or twenty years. After the

first year or two it is suffering thrown away. Instead of that, shut up those that are incorrigible as you would shut up lunatics, not to punish them more and more, but to keep them from doing harm to themselves or others, and make them defray by their labour the cost of their subsistence.

I have not heard whether Lord Granville has any designs upon your Government. Hardly, I should think, yet. But if I should hear I will take care to let you know. It would be a pleasant thing to see you come back, dear Charles, but I should be sorry if you were to come before you are tired of staying where you are. And I think there is no place you get tired of sooner than England. So we should not be likely to lose much of you if you were to come later. The only difference would be that you would go later. And now, you wanderer on the face of the earth and sea, good-bye.

Ever yours affectionately,

H. T.

From Henry Taylor to —— B——.

The Roost, Bournemouth: May 17, 1869.

Dear B——,—I am told that I shall have to go to a levee on the occasion of my apotheosis. I never went to Court in my life, and St. Michael and St. George themselves cannot be more uninstructed in its ways. Can you tell me how I am to proceed to get myself put into the requisite garb? When I was made an

honorary D.C.L. at Oxford I was taken to a shop where I hired a Doctor's gown for ten-and-sixpence, and that was all that my degree cost me. Can I do likewise now, and, if so, where is the shop, and what is the garment? Sir Frederick said he thought they must be black velvet, but does he know? Do, dear B——, get me put into the right articles at a small cost. I have new cause to lament the loss of my old friend Samuel Rogers. Two successive Poets Laureate went to Court on their appointment in borrowed plumes, and the plumes were borrowed from him. I well remember (how can I forget it?) a dinner in St. James's Place when the question arose whether Samuel's suit was spacious enough for Alfred. The elder poet turned to his man waiting behind his chair, 'I dare say, Edmund, you remember that Mr. Wordsworth wore them when he went to Court; I think it was you who dressed him on the occasion.' 'No, sir, no,' said Edmund, 'it was Mr. and Mrs. Moxon, and they had great difficulty in getting him into them.' No such suit remains for me, nor, if it did, would the same assistance be available. So pray give the subject your best consideration and advise me what to do. Thanking you by anticipation for your kind counsel,

I remain yours sincerely,

H. Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to Mrs. Pollock.

The Roost, Bournemouth : May 25, 1869.

My dear Mrs. Pollock,—I have not seen the 'Life of Landor.' What a biographical friend has to do in such a case, and in most other cases, is to announce frankly that whilst it *is* his purpose to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, it is *not* his purpose to tell the whole truth. That truth which is not the whole truth may be misleading, and in some measure have the effect of untruth ; but who can tell the whole truth about anybody or anything ? and who even knows a tenth part of it ? 'Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief ! ' might have for a context, 'Lord, I see, lead Thou me in my blindness ! ' One of the few articles that I have written in literary journals was an article on Landor's 'Imaginary Conversations,' written, I think, when I was two or three and twenty years of age, in the 'Quarterly Review.' It was written in the arrogant and malapert vein of review-writing prevailing in those days, when I knew no better, and was quite prepared to insult my superiors. Some five and twenty years afterwards I made Landor's acquaintance, having occasion to call upon him in Bath on the subject of his correspondence with Southey, which it was desired to include in the collection of Southey's Correspondence, then about to be published. I was waiting in his drawing-room till he should come downstairs, and looking at a picture of his house at

Fiesole which hung over the chimney-piece. He came, and after the usual greetings I pointed to the picture, and said I remembered seeing the house when passing it on my way to Fiesole and admiring the beauty of the place. 'Yes,' he said, 'a beautiful place, a charming place; I was very sorry to part from it, but my wife used me so ill I was obliged to come away.' There was at that time practising at Bath a famous Swedish doctor called De Beton, who cured curvature of the spine by what he called 'therapeutic manipulation;' this will explain to you the following note in my commonplace book: '24 December 1848.—Saw yesterday for the first time Walter Savage Landor. If there were any Dr. De Beton in morals who could make his *mind* straight, what a great man he would be! As it is, he is the greatest of the crooked.' He had a very choice collection of pictures. One of them was a Wilson which I had looked at with a good deal of admiration. It was forthwith packed up and sent after me. You may perhaps recollect to have seen it hanging over the portrait of Chatterton in my dining-room at the Uplands. He seemed a solitary and friendless man at that time, and I imagine that he had found it impossible to live in peace with any one but his dog, and in this dog his affections seemed to be centred. Of friends at a distance I suppose that, after the death of Hare, Forster was the chief. Southey had a great admiration of him, and they remained friends as long as Southey lived, but I think they had never

met more than once or perhaps twice. Southey spoke of him to me as a man of 'clear intellect and insane temper.' The epigraph prefixed to his octogenarian volume, 'Last Fruits off an Old Tree,' is singularly characteristic, both in the truth of the last two lines and in the utter delusion expressed in the first:

> I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
> Nature I loved; and next to Nature, Art;
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

It would have been well for him had he departed as soon as he was ready; the last I heard of him was from Aubrey de Vere, who saw him at Florence, alone still and most forlorn, 'sans eyes, sans ears,' &c., and complaining bitterly both of his condition and of those whom he charged with having brought him to it. He did not live long after that. I will get Forster's book, and I shall read it with interest, both for the subject's sake and for the writer's.

I had already heard Carlyle's statement of the difference between North and South, and had taken a note of it. I think it was said to Lord Russell at our house. It was from Lord Russell that I got it. As well as I can judge, there is a great deal of truth in it, and it has surprised me to see that when Sumner mixes up the anti-slavery cause with the cause of the North, it does not occur to his opponents (as far as I have seen) to reply that President Lincoln and his Government distinctly detached the

one cause from the others, and were quite prepared, and publicly proclaimed themselves prepared, to sacrifice the anti-slavery cause so that they could restore the Union ; and it was, as well as I recollect, only as a last resource, and when they could not help it, that they saw fit to make common cause with the Abolitionists. And, as to inconsistency on the part of those in this country who had emancipated the slaves in the West Indies and Mauritius, and objected to American emancipation, there is no pretext for accusing them of it. *They* paid for what they desired to give away, twenty millions of money for the liberty they gave to 800,000 slaves (or thereabouts). The American Emancipationists never dreamt of payment, and they never dreamt of preparation ; both of which had entered into our notions of beneficence. And, detestable as I believe the slavery to have been, I doubt whether, as the Americans have managed it, they have brought about a state of society which is much *less* detestable. One can only hope that sooner or later Providence will bring some good out of the evil of their unjust generosity.

Ever yours,

H. T.[1]

[1] Rossetti in a sonnet speaks of Chatterton's 'unrecorded face ;' and Professor Daniel Wilson says 'it is to be feared that no authentic portrait exists.' The portrait mentioned in this letter, representing Chatterton as a boy of twelve with a charming, odd, sulky, querulous face, was given by his sister, Mrs. Newton, to Southey ; was bought at the Southey sale by Miss Fenwick, and by her was given to Wordsworth with a reversion to Henry Taylor. It is now in Lady Taylor's possession. The boy wears a red coat, and has long auburn-brown hair.

From Mrs. Pollock to Henry Taylor.

59 Montague Square : July 1, 1869.

It is very long since I have heard from you, and I begin to feel starved, downcast, and low in spirit. I want to know how you all are ; how your daily life goes on ; with what occupations and what diversions ; and, in short, what you are all about ; a kind of hungry anxiety occasionally comes over me. Send me a little food. 'Un petit sou, s'il vous plaît. Ayez pitié,' &c.

If you can catch only one hair out of the tail of a minute, hold it out to me till I catch one end of it ; so wide the gap is, that I hardly know whereabouts I stood when I last exchanged words with you, but I rather think it was just before our visit to the Anthony Trollopes, which visit went off very satisfactorily. A. Trollope is pleased about your colonial order,[1] and his plain understanding cannot conceive the fastidiousness which thinks a form of distinction not worth having because it is sometimes ill bestowed. 'Let the man of high desert be satisfied that his desert is acknowledged,' he says, 'and not be scrupulous in weighing the exact degrees. Things cannot be so finely balanced in a rough world.'

He is a man of direct sympathies, strong in a straightforward direction, but to whom many devious, delicate turns and subtle ways of thought and feeling are not intelligible. We had fine weather, and our

[1] The knighthood of St. Michael and St. George.

time was passed chiefly in the garden—a handsome stiff garden of the Queen Anne style, with a square pond at one end of it and a smooth grass lawn at the other. We walked round and round this garden many times, Anthony Trollope smoking and talking all the way. Among other anecdotes he told me a curious one of his early life in Ireland when he was staying at Killarney.

A priest, into whose company he had fallen by chance, and whose name he did not know, was exhibiting to him the beauties of the lake, and Anthony Trollope, who was at that time fresh from the reading of the novel of 'The Collegians,' said, 'Ah, somewhere hereabouts poor Eily O'Connor was drowned; 'tis close upon this spot it must have been that the villain Hardress did that foulest of murders. What a scene! what passion, what character, what skill I find in that novel! What a frightful history it tells!' The priest remaining silent, Anthony Trollope thought that perhaps he did not know the story, and went on eagerly: 'Don't you know it? Isn't it a first-rate book? Isn't Eily O'Connor enchanting? Wasn't Hardress——.'

'Hardress?' said the priest, turning suddenly round, facing Anthony Trollope, and laying his hands on his shoulders—'Hardress was my first cousin, and I stood on the steps of the scaffold when he was hung.'

This was a painful moment for Anthony Trollope. However, the priest made no defence of his cousin,

and only gave him some more hideous details concerning the crime: he told how *not* Danny Mann, but Hardress himself, held the unhappy woman's head down in the water till she was dead.

It is well that Griffin altered this fact, which for a poetical work of fiction would have been too revolting.

Since reading Landor I have gone through old Crabb Robinson's diary, and there again came upon some occasional allusions to you. It is a pity that he blunts the point of most of his anecdotes; he quite spoils C. Lamb's humour about the turban and the hat by misplacing it. He makes him say to you as soon as you have finished your observations upon Mahomet, 'Pray, sir, did you come here in a turban or a hat?' instead of bringing out, when he met you hunting for your hat in the hall, 'Are you looking for your turban, sir?' The book is amusing, as it brings you into the company of people you care about, but their talk is not well repeated. Crabb Robinson was an appreciative but not a very clever man, and his memory was not an exact one.

The only book I have read besides the Landor and the Crabb is Mill 'On the Subjection of Women'—that is, the only new book; as to old favourites, I am continually strolling through their avenues of beauty, and I have just now taken a ramble in the 'Sicilian Summer,' which might make a charming comedy for the stage, if we had anything like a Théâtre Français here, which by the help of Government could support

a choice company of players ; but we have not, and there is consequently little worth seeing ; only Miss Bateman's considerable powers are just now exercising themselves in a rather uncomfortable piece of Tom Taylor's.

From James Spedding to Henry Taylor.

Merehouse : October 20, 1869.

I return the extract from the 'Pall Mall,' and agree that it is written sensibly and impartially. But it does not touch my case, except in one point, and in that I differ. I do not hunt myself, and therefore I do not consider myself answerable for any cruelty there may be in that method of killing foxes. I also disapprove of the preservation of noxious animals for the sake of any pleasure there may be in catching them ; and I shall always, wherever it is lawful, kill a fox when I see him, the shortest way I can. That whatever pleasure I derive from shooting is not connected with any pleasure in killing or giving pain, is evident from more considerations than one. In the first place, the shooting from which I derive most pleasure, and on which I bestow most pains, is directed against painted canvas stitched upon straw ; neither of which can either die or feel pain from the wound. In the second place, the only sentient creatures that I ever attempt to kill are those which are either troublesome—as gnats, wasps, rats, hawks, carrion-crows, poisonous snakes, noxious

vermin, &c., and the aforesaid foxes—or good to eat. And that sportsmen (among whom I do not reckon pigeon-match men) do shoot animals for food and not otherwise, appears from the fact that they never shoot at things which are not used for food, though every country place supplies abundance of living things that can be killed with a gun; and if the sport were in the killing there would be no need of a gamekeeper. Rooks, and thrushes, and blackbirds abound here, and would give as good 'shooting' as anything else; but as nobody eats them nobody shoots them: except perhaps the gardener, to whom they are noxious animals, and who kills them in defence of his fruit. Furthermore, it is a fact, certainly with me, and I believe with most shooters, that the killing is the painful and not the pleasurable part of the pleasure of shooting. If I had skill enough to kill everything I shoot at quite, and instantly, or else not to kill it at all, I should shoot with much more satisfaction. And if any bird will do as much for me when my time comes, I shall be much obliged to him.

Upon the whole, therefore, I think I may claim to be as blameless as the butcher, unless it be held, as the writer in the 'Pall Mall' seems to hold, that it is wrong to take pleasure in doing that which it is not otherwise wrong to do. And this is the point on which I differ with him. I do not know whether the butcher feels pain in the exercise of his calling, but if he does I am sorry for it. If Providence has con-

trived that whatever has to be killed for food shall give pleasure to him that kills as well as to him that eats the same, the contrivance is beneficent and not to be quarrelled with. I wish there were no wars ; but as long as men have to fight I should be sorry they should be deprived of the sort of pleasure which accompanies the excitement. And as long as the mistress of the house wants a dish of partridges I should be sorry to find it my duty to provide them, without receiving any pleasure from the skill and exercise required by the capture.

From Henry Taylor to Albert Dicey.

Bournemouth : August 16, 1870.

Dear Mr. Dicey,—I am greatly obliged to you for the attention you have given to my Penal Code paper. As to the presumption of innocence, what I have to say is that your views do not differ materially from my own. I do not contend against the presumption of innocence when there is no reason to presume anything else. And when there have been previous convictions you do not contend for it. Perhaps I might say that in cases where there is no evidence either way—that is, till evidence is produced—there should be no presumption either way. But if this is a difference between us I believe it does not amount to much.

As to corporal punishment, we differ more, at least so far as I can pretend to have an opinion without further investigation. But the chief drift of the

investigation I am promoting is as to effectiveness, and the East Indies will afford experience of whipping before 1861, of suspension of whipping from 1861 to 1864, and resumption of whipping since 1864. The objection of brutalising the public mind seems to me a questionable objection. I do not see why the public should not feel what I think I individually should feel—a moral satisfaction in the infliction of whipping for offences of cruelty and violence, nor why that moral satisfaction should be attended by any influences of a hardening or lowering tendency. I read this morning in the 'Pall Mall Gazette' of yesterday an account of what had been done by a man called Mahony. He was seen dragging his wife by the hair of her head and beating and kicking her violently. She was on her hands and knees bleeding from the mouth and eyes, frightfully swollen and bruised, and with two wounds on the left temple, which were bleeding. Let us suppose that while this was going on, John Smith, a minute elderly artisan in weak health, were to pass by, he would feel much moved to interfere, but knowing that the only result would be that Mahony, strong and furious, would first knock him down and then beat his wife all the more, he keeps aloof, feeling humiliated and degraded by the sense of physical force triumphant. Then comes up W. Jones, a gigantic waggoner, with a horsewhip in his hand, and having first rescued the woman proceeds to inflict a severe whipping on Mahony. Is John Smith brutalised at the spec-

tacle ?—I should say not. And if not, why should he be brutalised if the law, with certainty, deliberation, and measured severity, inflicts the whipping which W. Jones was accidentally enabled to inflict ? You will say perhaps that there is a difference between hot blood and cold blood. But in my estimation there should be enough of hot blood for the purpose, without being present at the scene.

After the publication of a letter to Mr. Gladstone in December 1868, and whilst the Habitual Criminals Act of 1869 was in preparation, I had a great deal of communication with many sorts of people about this and other such topics, and I found a remarkable concurrence of opinion in favour of whipping. On looking over my letters I find in the number of those who were of my way of thinking—Sir Henry Holland, Mr. Greg, Professor Kingsley, Lord Chief Justice Bovill, Father Newman, Lord Lyttelton, Lord Carnarvon, and Lord Grey. There were, I think, two, and only two, dissentients. Lecky was one. The other was more important than any, for it was the man to whom the construction of the Code is to be committed —Robert Wright.[1]

You say that it will be found difficult to make corporal punishment ultimately effective without increasing its severity until it approaches near to torture. Whilst the punishment is absolutely novel a light amount of it may be as effective as a larger amount afterwards ; but when it ceases to be novel,

[1] Note, 1878. Robert Wright was converted.—*H. T.*

and the imagination is no longer affected by the notion of it as by a novelty, I should not expect that there will be a further variation of the amount required for adequacy. It will be simply a given amount of bodily pain, severe for grave offences, not so severe for others; and being, when severe, as you say, of the nature of torture, I am not sure that it would be intrinsically preferable to other methods of inflicting bodily pain, which are more commonly called by the name of torture, were it not that the horrible abuses of other methods in former times have led to their being regarded with more aversion by those who shrink from the infliction of bodily pain by way of punishment. It may not be easy to take the measure of bodily pain on the one hand, and of mental and physical distress and privation on the other, so as to judge of the comparative amounts of suffering; but I lean to the opinion that much suffering might be spared with no loss of penal effectiveness by substituting short and sharp bodily pains for considerable portions of prolonged unhappiness.

I believe what you say about demand and supply is true to this extent, that master-thieves who are in the habit of training boys to steal in their service, if one boy were to be taken away, would exert themselves to find another; and though their difficulties would be increased to a certain extent, they would be enabled to supply themselves with more or less of the article they wanted; but if the master-thieves themselves and not the apprentices were taken

away, I think the demand for thieves would be less and not more. I do not think that in thieving the rate of profit comes into the account of demand and supply.

I hope we shall have the pleasure of seeing you again at Sheen, whither we shall probably return in October or November, and that I may have an opportunity of a more satisfactory discussion of these matters than can easily be had on paper. Though, if my object were to convert you to my views and not to see what can be said on both sides, I believe it would not be a politic proceeding to address arguments to a lawyer. I recollect your uncle, Sir James Stephen, objecting to a preacher at the Temple preaching argumentative sermons, inasmuch as it is the business and habit of lawyers to take up the arguments on the other side.

Believe me yours sincerely,

H. Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to James Spedding.

The Roost, Bournemouth : August 26, 1870.

Your book arrived duly, and I was glad of anything that brought us together again in some sort of way, and glad of the book for the book's sake too. The conversion from Bacon's own style to the rhetorical makes it rather arduous to me ; for solid substance and rhetorical style do not suit each other, and one seems to be pushing through a flying crowd,

but of course it is a crowd of doctors and preachers and prophets. How one starts at the conjunction of the names of Bacon and Shakespeare! and how strange it seems that no other than a casual conjunction of these names should seem to exist or should have been yet discovered! If the world knows nothing of its greatest men (which I have always thought a very questionable proposition), at least one might expect its greatest men to know something of each other, and to leave some mark and token of the knowledge. I suppose there are scores of old family archives in existence hitherto unexplored, and it is still not impossible that something more than the name of Shakespeare may be met with. And after all, having him 'as in his books alive,' his other life may be very possibly as well unknown and unsearched, and we 'Thrice happy should we know to know no more.'

From James Spedding to Henry Taylor.

Mirehouse: August 30, 1870.

It has always seemed to me very wonderful and unaccountable that no scrap of Shakespeare's handwriting, more than his name, should have been preserved or discovered; not a single letter, nor a single verse. But I do not see anything surprising in the fact—for I take it to be a fact—that Bacon knew nothing about him, and that he knew nothing of Bacon except his political writings and his popular

reputation as a rising lawyer, of which there is no reason to suppose that he was ignorant. Why should Bacon have known more of Shakespeare than you do of Mark Lemon, or Planché, or Morton? If among the three-volume novels that furnish the circulating libraries one should turn out to be immortal, people will perhaps wonder hereafter that you were not acquainted with the author or authoress. But the answer will be simple—you did not expect to meet with anything immortal in that department of literature, and had not heard of it, or him, or her. I have no reason to think that Bacon had ever either seen or read anything of Shakespeare's composition. 'Venus and Adonis' and the 'Rape of Lucrece' are the most likely; but one can easily imagine his reading them and not caring to read anything else by the same hand. But here is the postman.

From Henry Taylor to the Hon. Mrs. E. Villiers.

The Roost: June 19, 1871.

Dearest Mrs. Edward,—Thanks for one of your good old letters, with your mind running about naked, as it always did. I forget what it was I said about age which leads you to insist on my extreme youth. I was an old boy sixty years ago, and now I am an old man. I am perhaps as happy now as I was then, or as, upon the whole, I have been in the long intermediate tract of time; but if I say so it is because I take a rateable average. The ups and downs are

different. I have no longer the severe nervous depressions to which I was liable in my youth and in portions of my middle age—the apparently causeless distress ; nor, on the other hand, have I the inebrieties of the imagination which belonged to those days—the exuberance of nervous enjoyment, such as people speak of having from opium or wine. Tea or coffee produced them with me, or they came of themselves. These have long ceased. I can sometimes write as well as formerly, but the intellectual excitement is not accompanied with the same nervous enjoyment. I have been correcting 'Van Artevelde' for a new edition (the current one being nearly at an end), and I have written some new bits of scenes which were wanted here and there, and they seem to me to be just like the old ones. And as to my prose, I wrote an article in 'Fraser's Magazine' for February, 1870, reviewing Mill 'On the Subjection of Women.' I will send you a copy by book-post. The former half of it you might think dry and scientific, and you can skip that. The latter half (p. 156 to the end) I think you will find amusing. And now I am beginning to think that old age has taken effect upon me in one way at least, making me a little more egotistic than I was wont to be.

Lord Russell is eight or nine years older than I am, and did you read in the 'Times' the three columns of his speech of last week on the Washington treaty ? He had come to see us at Sheen the week before, and both A—— and I thought him

looking stronger and more vigorous than usual; but I was certainly not prepared for such an exploit as that very able and effective speech of three columns. I went to Pembroke Lodge to take leave of him the day before I left Sheen (Sunday of last week), and he told me a singular circumstance told to him the day before by the Duc de Chartres, who was just starting for France in high spirits, and had come to him on the same errand of leave-taking. The Duke said he had been fighting in France for six months of the war under an assumed name, and Gambetta had promoted him, of course without knowing who it was that he was promoting. The Russells were the only persons in or near Sheen between whom and me any transaction in the nature of leave-taking occurred when I came away, and in the week that I have been here one old Scotch gentleman is the only person who has come to see me. Sounds solitary, does it not? There has been one sunny day when I was able to get out, and I went to 'The House' for those of the consumptive patients who, being incurable, cannot be admitted into the Sanitarium. Of four friends whom I had left there last October, two were not dead yet, and they seemed very glad to see me. One of the two survivors had wept when we parted, and I knew that I should have a welcome from him if Bournemouth should not have another to offer me.

Ever yours affectionately,

H. T.

From Henry Taylor to the Hon. Mrs. E. Villiers.[1]

East Sheen, S.W. : November 30, 1871.

Dearest Mrs. Edward,—I am pleased that you should take so much interest in that old Philip as well as this. But I think you are wrong. I know that many people, who have been taken with poems read in their youth, do not in after years like to read them in any altered form, even though they may be improved by the alteration, and though, had they first read them as improved, they would have liked them all the better, and those who may read them for the first time hereafter as altered *will* like them all the better. But a writer ought to take less account of readers who have read his poems already than of those who are to read them for the first time hereafter. This you will admit ; but you think that alterations made long after the first writing will *not* be improvements, and that the harmony of the poem will be impaired. I do not agree with you. 'Van Artevelde' was begun, I think, about the year 1827, and not finished till 1834 ; the first part is more out of harmony with the last in point of workmanship and versification than anything I might write now would be. There is nothing in which art is more improved by time and cultivation than the sense of congruity and the faculty of harmonising. Moreover, your object of preserving 'Van Artevelde' as it was first

[1] In reply to a letter of protest against alterations in *Philip van Artevelde.*

written, or rather as it was first printed, which is a different thing, is past praying for. It has gone through six editions (if I remember right), and I have made many corrections and additions in each (with the exception perhaps of the second, which I had to prepare in a hurry, the first having run off in a few weeks). Two additional scenes were introduced in 'Van Artevelde' in the third or fourth editions, which were undoubtedly required to carry on the action, and are, in my opinion, amongst the best in the play. Scenes or bits of scenes remain to this day for the same purpose, and they are written and will be printed in the forthcoming edition. 'The eye seeth not itself' (as my father noted in his pocket-book, after examining the question whether a slight paralytic stroke he had just undergone had impaired his faculties); and *my* conclusion that my faculties are unimpaired may be, like his, open to the question which that significant note suggested. But still, one must act upon such judgment as one can exercise, and I have not any real doubt that I can write scenes and bits of scenes in the manner in which I wrote forty years ago, and that no one will be able to see a difference. And neither have I any doubt that the scenes and bits of scenes I have written were wanted. What I propose to myself is always, when there is a doubt, to give the benefit of the doubt to things as they are. And I think you make another mistake. You say I 'pretend not to care for the public.' I cannot remember to have pretended at any time to be

indifferent to popular acceptation. I have not pursued it much perhaps ; but I should always have been glad to get it ; and though the history of literature does not lead one to make much account of it as a test of permanent celebrity, yet I do not see why popularity should not be accepted as corroborating, *so far as it goes*, any inherent evidences of lasting value. Dryden, writing, I think, about fifty or sixty years after Shakespeare's death, tells us that in his time two of Massinger's and two of Ben Jonson's plays were acted for one of Shakespeare's ; and I doubt whether Shakespeare's pre-eminent celebrity began before the middle of the next century—i.e. more than a hundred years after his death (which was in 1616) ; whilst the 'immortal' poems of Du Bartas (his contemporary) sprang into popularity at once, and one of them passed through thirty editions in five or six years, though chiefly known in England by Sylvester's translation. Two hundred years afterwards, Hervey's 'Meditations' were equally immortal. And Tupper's 'Proverbial Philosophy' is immortal now, as well as Keble's 'Christian Year.' And I believe that in England each century has had its wax candle which passed for a celestial luminary, and its celestial luminary which passed for a wax candle. But the centuries we can call literary are only about three, and that affords but a short experience, whether of mortal or immortal apparitions ; and I see no reason for concluding *from* popularity *against* permanent fame. For myself, I should have had rather more

faith in the permanence of my works if all the world had agreed to assure me of it, and I have certainly not less faith in the permanence of Tennyson's because all the world *has* given the assurance to him. All that experience teaches is that there is a good deal of uncertainty in popular estimates, and that one or two generations in a century may differ very widely from the generations that follow.

And so ends my rather long vindication, and you must be content, Mrs. Edward, and hold it to be good, valid, and all-sufficient.

Ever yours affectionately,

H. T.

From Henry Taylor to Lord Blachford.

The Roost, Bournemouth: August 12, 1872.

My dear Blachford,—. . . I have been looking at the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona' and the 'Tempest,' that I might the better understand what you say of the verse. The verse of the 'Tempest' has all the varieties you describe, and probably they were not so much the result of art as of mood, the sentiments to be expressed governing the movement without much of deliberate adaptation.

In the versification of my own, which I like best, I have had the movement of several lines in my head first, and then the words *filled in*, as it were, with perhaps one or two retouchings that came after. As to the verse of the 'Two Gentlemen,' I dare say it

has the sweetness you speak of, but the monotony, which you speak of also, makes it not unfrequently unattractive to me, insomuch that I share the doubts expressed by some commentators as to whether the play was all Shakespeare's, though I do not at all doubt that his hand is in it. Launce's soliloquy with the dog can be nobody else's. It is true that Shakespeare was capable of writing everything that is good, bad, or indifferent, and this makes it very difficult to say that anything attributed to him is not his. But there is one sort of badness which I can scarcely think him capable of, because it belongs to the inborn ear, and that is a monotony of regularity studiously maintained. He could be careless to any amount—probably obliged to write when he was hurried, or tired, or dull, or ill—and he would sometimes even let a line end with an 'and' or a 'to,' but he would never *take pains* to sound flat or feeble, or tether his verse to a stake, as Massinger did. And thus, when I have endeavoured to weed out of 'Henry the Eighth,' or other plays, what Shakespeare did not write, I have not asked myself, 'Could Shakespeare have perpetrated these forced fancies and these stupid jokes?' Very probably he could and did. But I have asked myself, 'Is this Shakespeare's *voice*?' In the greater part of the 'Two Gentlemen' I think the voice is Shakespeare's, though in its youth, and before it had acquired all the force and freedom of its later utterances. But now and then I could fancy the voice to be another's.

August 17.

I was interrupted by business, for business is not the less important because it is so soon to take its final leave, and you will know the result to me of Ebden and Fairfield being away for their holidays. I got my *bene decessit*—abundantly encomiastic—the day before yesterday, and my retirement is to take effect on the 29th September. I shall then devote myself to myself—that is, to my Autobiography, which, I suppose, will now consist mainly of selected letters, and the business of selection is one for which I feel but little aptitude ; a ready and decisive judgment as to eligibility being what I am wholly unconscious of. There will present itself a long dull domestic letter with a bright spot in it (I do not speak of my own letters only, but of my *correspondence*, for it is a common fault of biographers to publish under the name of correspondence the letters *from* a man, without any of those *to* him), or there will present itself a lively letter, full of kicks and cuffs dealt to this person or that, who may be alive, or may have relations living that care for them ; and, as I remember hearing some one say (A——, I think), it is an ugly blow that is dealt by a dead man's hand. And altogether the task seems to me, upon taking a cursory look at it, to be full of difficulties ; but it sometimes happens that difficulties which look large in the distance diminish as one approaches them, and I must hope that these, if I

march boldly up to them, will hide their diminished heads.

Ever yours affectionately,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Henry Taylor to Earl Grey.

The Roost: August 30, 1872.

We have been passing the stormy summer here very quietly, with only one break—a visit of a fortnight which my eldest daughter and I paid to Lord Blachford in Devonshire—and here we shall remain till some time in October, when we shall go to London, there to pass a winter for the first time for thirty years. —— must be there to be prepared for a Civil Service examination, and it is best that where he is his home should be. I do not know how we shall like it; we none of us like the thoughts of it. But perhaps we shall see something of a few persons from whom, having regard to the relations between time and space in and about London, we have been hitherto far as the poles asunder. If so, we may like London better than we like the thoughts of it.

Many thanks for your speech. In the general purport of it I cordially concur. In my opinion, no greater service could be rendered to the country than that of inculcating with effect (if such inculcation is possible) the elemental truth which you make the basis of your argument—that the object of reforms in the representation is to produce a better House of

Commons. Then we should get rid of a thousand false notions of political rights founded upon something else than political expediency. If, therefore, it were possible that a comprehensive scheme of reform such as you contemplate could be enacted in its totality—such a scheme, that is, as might redeem the national interests in legislation from being sacrificed to party interests and popular cries—I should be entirely with you as to the superior claims of such a scheme; and I am entirely with you as to the postponement of partial organic changes till such a scheme can be devised. But I confess that this is in my estimation postponement to the Greek Kalends. You distinguish justly between public opinion and a popular cry, and you define public opinion as the opinion of the majority of those who are able to think and to form an opinion for themselves. But in these days this real public opinion is too much comminuted and divided against itself to concur in any *comprehensive* measure of reform; and such partial concurrence as could be brought about would not avail to carry any such measure, unless by mixing with it something which would bring in the aid of a popular cry, and this something would probably be so mischievous as to make the measure in its totality inexpedient. Believing, therefore, that no comprehensive measure of organic change which is innocent can be successful, and that the results of any partial measures which could succeed must be merely matter of conjecture, I think that the efforts of those who

form or guide public opinion should be directed to making the best of the House of Commons as it is and enforcing upon it the duty of occupying itself with legislation which all parties agree to be required for the public weal, and on which 'real public opinion,' as you define it, is not much, or at least not hopelessly, divided. I think that if the House of Commons, as it is constituted, was less self-occupied and less jealous of its technical and (so called) constitutional powers, it could do its work well enough and exercise real power to a much larger extent than it does in promoting the public welfare. And I think that public men of all parties are too much disposed to flatter this puerile pride and these jealousies of the House of Commons. If the House would distrust its own ignorance and place confidence in the knowledge of experts, or of delegates of its own, in matters in which no sinister interests can be suspected, and if it would silence or discourage the more empty and obtrusive of its members, a great deal of its time would be spared which is now worse than wasted.

From Earl Grey to Henry Taylor.

Howick : September 4, 1872.

My dear Taylor,— . . . With respect to my speech, I am glad to find that there is so much of it in which you concur; perhaps on the point on which you chiefly differ from me, I might agree with you that on the whole it would be wiser to maintain the

House of Commons as it is than to attempt to improve it, if I believed that this were possible. But in 1864 I recommended an attempt to improve the House of Commons because I was convinced that this was the only way of averting changes which would make it worse. I should have been well content to keep it as it was, but I saw clearly that this could not be done, and therefore I wished to avert mischievous by beneficial change. My anticipations proved correct, and for two or three years' respite from democratic change in the Constitution we threw away the golden opportunity of effecting a well-considered and useful reform, which was at that time quite feasible if the political leaders on both sides would have considered at all the public interest, and which I believe it was in the power of Palmerston, if he had wished it, to have accomplished. In like manner, now, bad as I think the House of Commons since the reform of 1867, I feel so much the difficulty and danger of attempting again to alter the Constitution, that I should be inclined to try, as you recommend, to make the best of it, were it not as clear to me now as it was eight years ago that to stand still is utterly impossible. The same causes which have led this year to the passing of the Ballot Bill will very soon lead our Ministry (and, even if the present Ministers were removed, we should have others who would be as bad) to propose electoral districts with representation according to population, and a further reduction of the franchise. The measure would complete

the degradation of Parliament, and establish about as bad a Government in this country as it is possible to conceive; and yet, if they were once proposed with the authority of a Government, resistance to them would be futile. Nor does it seem to me at all impossible—looking to the opinions of late expressed by such Radicals as Professor Fawcett and others—that a measure of reform might be agreed upon which might not be what I should myself altogether approve, but which would be a change in the right direction, and make the House better than it is. You say the present House might answer well enough *if* it would act in a certain manner; but this is just what it will not do, and which the manner in which it is elected makes it practically impossible that it should.

Yours very truly,

GREY.

From Henry Taylor to Earl Grey.

The Roost: September 6, 1872.

Dear Lord Grey,—Many thanks for your letter. . . . I think it is very likely, as you say, that the House of Commons, constituted as it is, will continue to give only a fraction of its time to useful legislation. The only difference between us is that I do not believe in the practicability of supplanting instalments of organic change by a great, good, and conclusive change. And therefore I think that all efforts

should be directed to make each annual fraction of useful legislation the most that it can be made, as against the efforts—1st, of those who would supplant it by fragmentary changes of doubtful result ; 2nd, of those who would supplant it by comprehensive change of a dangerous character ; 3rd, of those who, like yourself, would supplant it by the agitation of comprehensive changes which would be safe and beneficial could they be enacted as they are conceived, but which, if they could make their way at all, would be sure to blend themselves as they proceeded with some element of destruction. But perhaps I am too ignorant of the state of political parties to form a just judgment, and it may be that, as you think, it is impossible to stand still, even for two or three sessions.

I am sorry that you should feel the effects of age in the way you speak of, or that you should even think that you so feel them. I remember that in the latter life of my father and stepmother they used to attribute to old age failures of memory and other failures which I knew perfectly well had belonged to them ever since I could recollect them. I do not readily admit such impressions myself. My minutes and drafts seem to me much what they used to be, and even some scenes written for this year's edition of 'Van Artevelde' seem like the old ones, and I should say the same of your speeches. As to the judgment, as you say, it ought to be rather better than worse in old age ; but, without being worse, it

may be weaker ; and I think I have less confidence in my judgment than I had once, and more disposition to bear upon the judgment of others.

Yours sincerely,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Henry Taylor to Lord Monteagle.

The Roost : September 19, 1872.

Now you mention it, I do seem to remember your aunt saying something about your having come and gone so hastily on that day, but I am afraid I did not listen to her with due deference, for I certainly did not take in the notion that you had anything to do but to go whither you were bound. However, as you tell me you owe me an apology, I suppose I was wrong, and I will try to be more sensitive another time. As to the other delinquency —about the telegram—I have no recollection of any telegram at all, nor consequently of any harm that it did me. But as you say you owe me an apology for that too, I have no doubt you are quite right, and that you did something very wrong, and I forgive you. . . . We have with us just now the Dean of St. Paul's and Mrs. Church. I have only lately made the Dean's acquaintance, but we have made the most of the time. Amongst the intellectual men I have known, I hardly know one that is more agreeable. The Bishop of Salisbury is taking a holiday in this place, and, being a connection of the Dean, is asked to

meet him to-day. I hope everything will be right, but I call to mind an incident which occurred when a lady with a small establishment asked the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol (Dr. Monck) to dinner. She procured the services *ad hoc* of a greengrocer who had formerly been a butler, and of a boy who knew not what waiting was. The boy in the course of the day so teased the greengrocer with asking for instructions as to what he was to do, that at last the greengrocer, in a moment of impatience and levity said, 'Do you stand behind the Bishop's chair, and when his lordship takes his first glass of wine, do you take your napkin and wipe his mouth!' The unhappy boy took the instruction at the foot of the letter, and you may imagine the old lady's feelings when she witnessed the scene that took place. The servants tried to make out that the boy was drunk, but after a strict enquiry it was proved that he was only obeying orders.

I say again, I hope Fanny will be all herself, and that the Bishop of Salisbury will have nothing to complain of; but these are serious entertainments.

From Aubrey de Vere to Henry Taylor.

Curragh Chase, Adare: November 18, 1873.

Your letter has given me a strange day—one with an indescribable mixture of sadness and sweetness—for it has sent me looking over your old letters, and in them retracing more than half my life. The sad

thought is, 'Can such tracts of happiness, indeed, lie behind one?' with the question, 'Did one, indeed, while passing through such golden regions, fail so much to value them at their full worth?' The sweet thought is one which has often come to me, but which, 'as the sweet years insensibly go by,' recurs more often and with more power—viz. that nothing of good which has been vouchsafed to us has been given in vain, and that all good things would have been worse than vain if they were not intended to remain with us for ever (if we do not mar our destinies), even in the most advanced stage of our future being; to remain with us, glorified no doubt, or they could not coexist with that Beatific Vision which constitutes Heaven; but in and under the glory, revealing to us a reality even greater than that which they presented to us on earth, because more essential and less accidental.

Whatever your letters may contain for others, or could contain, if they were the best letters ever written, to me they must ever be precious, *most* because the memorial of a friendship for which (little worthy of it as I have been in so many respects) I have been more and more grateful as youth, with all its vividness of feeling, has gone by. In no other letters do I find the traces of a friendship as constant, as forbearing, and as enriching.

From Henry Taylor to Aubrey de Vere.

66 Eaton Square, S.W.: November 24, 1873.

My dear Aubrey,—In the last year or two I have had many such days as you describe—for many have been passed amongst old letters. But though there has been some sweetness in them, the sadness has been in much larger measure. Most of the writers have been long dead; but I hardly think that their letters, with all the lost love that they represented (so far as love is lost by death), were so depressing to me as those which represented ardours that are dead and gone, though the objects or subjects of them are still living. We must hope that there is a resurrection for the loves that are buried alive. The credit you gave me for constancy I can take in a sense. It is the coldness rather than the inconstancy of the affections that I have to complain of in myself. And it is a great comfort and consolation to me that, in your case, what may fail in me through age or death will be made up by the youthful warmth of my girls' affections. For I think there is no one they are more fond of than they are of you.

Ever yours affectionately,

Henry Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to the Hon. Mrs. K——.

66 Eaton Square : November 25, 1873.

Thanks, dearest L——, for sending me some of your sunshine from Cannes. It reached me through one of the thickest of London fogs, and you must believe that my thanks go to you with a lively impulse, for they have to push their way through the same medium. Thanks, too, for your purpose of calling upon my friends—or rather acquaintances—for I only came to know them two or three weeks before I left Bournemouth. But have you not found in your dealings with your fellow-creatures that some persons whom you can only call acquaintances are more to you for the moment than some others whom you may and do, with great fitness and propriety, call friends ?

My friend of yesterday,
Taken in the flower and freshness of goodwill,

'will'—do something or other—I forget what follows, but it expresses my experience of my own feelings. Are they very frivolous ? or are you, my serious L——, conscious of something like it, continuing even to your present advanced age ? As to ——, I would by no means suspect her of these superficial sentiments. She is too far withdrawn into the depths of life.

And so, my dears, you are reading John Mill on Liberty. I think it was that book which he sent me when it was published, and I think some letters

passed between us on the subject. The book of his which *I* have been reading is his Autobiography. It is a true and very painful picture. The intention was that he was to walk on his way in the world a disembodied intellect, and what happened was that, when he had gone a certain distance, a passion sprang out of the bush like a hundred Ashantees, and he was carried away captive. I am told that those who know the lady found nothing in her to justify the extravagant terms in which he speaks of her. They say that he mistook the echo of his own mind for a voice of inspiration from hers.

The Mrs. —— you speak of is a daughter of the Lady Stanley of Alderley of thirty or forty years ago. Your aunt and I knew the family a little, and more lately we saw Mrs. —— once or twice when her husband took our house at Bournemouth for the winter some years ago. We understand that Mr. —— had prayer meetings in our drawing-room. Your aunt did not like to hear of them ; but whether she objected in the interests of the Church or in those of the drawing-room carpet I could not quite make out—perhaps in both.

I paid Carlyle a visit a few days ago, and I think the account you had of him can scarcely have been correct. I heard nothing but the customary grumble, and when I told him he would have to dine with us on Thursday (the day after to-morrow) he laughed, but made no real resistance, and he is to come accordingly. He does, however, look a little more

withered than he did last year, if he looks habitually as he did last week. One cannot judge by a single visit. I drive through London streets, and everybody I see looks ill and ugly. The wind is from the east. I drive through the streets in a south-west wind, and only nine-tenths of the people look ugly and ill. The objects I see are different, and also I see them with different eyes. Tell —— not hastily to reject a man who is injudicious enough to make her a proposal in a north-east wind; nor yet hastily to accept him if he comes in a south-west wind; but in either case to beg him to call again when the wind is the other way.

I think I have answered all your enquiries now, dear. So good-bye.

Ever yours affectionately,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Henry Taylor to Aubrey de Vere.

66 Eaton Square, S.W.: December 5, 1873.

So you have seen the intellectual ghost of John Mill. He was not really such a disembodied intellect as he appears in that Autobiography, nor were the humanities he partook of confined to that one passion which took possession of him. Carlyle, who was here yesterday, says he was an affectionate creature, and so I should say, speaking from the impression I received in the days in which we were familiar associates. But it is in the nature of a passion to submerge the affections.

A VARIOUS READING.[1]

(*Sent to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, February* 1874.)

What makes a hero? Not success, not fame,
Triumphal trappings and the loud acclaim
Of full-fed followers—caps tost up in the air,
Or pen of journalist with flourish fair,
Place, power, predominance, magic of a name:
These, though his rightful tribute, he can spare;
His rightful tribute, not his end or aim
Or true reward; for never yet did these
Refresh the soul or set the heart at ease.
What makes a hero? an heroic mind
Expressed in action, in endurance proved:
And if there be pre-eminence of right,
Derived through pain well suffered, to the height
Of rank heroic, 'tis to bear unmoved
Not toil by day scarce known of human kind,
Not watch by night when Fate is on the wind,
But worse—ingratitude and poisonous darts
Launched by the country he had served and loved.
This with a free, unclouded spirit pure,
This in the strength of silence to endure
A dignity to noble deeds imparts
Beyond the gauds and pageants of renown:
This is the hero's complement and crown;
This missed, one struggle had been wanting still,
One glorious triumph of the heroic will,
One self-approval in his heart of hearts.

[1] Originally forming the seventh stanza of the ode by Henry Taylor, entitled *Heroism in the Shade*, which does honour to Charles Elliot. See *Autobiography*, vol. i. p. 301. Here altered and adapted to the new occasion.

From the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone to Henry Taylor.

11 Carlton House Terrace, S.W. : February 28, 1874.

My dear Taylor,—I have received some verses, identified only by the handwriting, but full also of the strong and manful spirit which, rare indeed among the mass, marks all your thought and language. What a picture you have drawn !

Had I not well known the kind and warm nature of the man to whom the character allots them, I might have taken them for satire ; coming from you, I know that they are neither irony nor flattery ; neither, indeed, are they a portrait ; but I hope and trust they are 'a light, a landmark,' an incentive.

The truth is that, though I avow my regret to have lost hold of the finance of the year, which I think we could have managed to good purpose, I am, in the general retrospect (I fear), but too contented ; too proud, perhaps. So that I do not find it difficult to maintain my equanimity : I am in much more danger of losing my modesty, if I had or have any. To suffer for the right is a noble thing for all, and not least noble in the case of those whose duty it has been to act, or at least strive to act, for all. I cannot honestly appropriate what you have said ; but I can and shall study it, and it will be my fault if I do not profit in the contemplation of the pure and lordly image you have set before me.

Are you staying in London? If you are, could you kindly dine here on Tuesday night at eight?

Very sincerely yours,

W. E. Gladstone.

From Henry Taylor to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

66 Eaton Square, S.W.: March 1, 1874.

My dear Gladstone,—I felt strongly what those verses express, though they are not new; for I found it more easy to adapt what I had written in former years than in this my seventy-fourth year to write what should be equally worthy of the occasion.

I am not generally a believer in old proverbs (or, at least, only a believer in them as expressing half truths), and, though I never much liked the public, I was not quite prepared for the evidence of mutability they have lately afforded. However, when the order of the day is 'Levia sursum,' one can see some fitness in the occupant of the highest place. The unfitness is in the subordinates, for most of whom I have a good deal of respect.

I am very unlucky in having to entertain a dinner party at home on Tuesday. I should have liked so much to accept your invitation. May I come to breakfast some morning?

We have been living in London all this winter, and here we remain till Easter, when we go back to

Bournemouth. Your letter has given me great pleasure, and I am ever,

Yours very sincerely,

HENRY TAYLOR.

Pray remember me very kindly to Mrs. Gladstone.

From Henry Taylor to His Grace the Archbishop of York.

The Roost : May 6, 1874.

My dear Lord Archbishop,—It is so long since your Grace and I have met that I hardly know whether I can still claim your acquaintance, but I have just read in the 'Pall Mall Gazette' of the 4th what purports to be an extract from a sermon preached by you last Sunday, and I have read it with so much interest in seeing the subject of field sports taken up by you, that I persuade myself I may be allowed to take an exception to one sentence—that in which you say, or are reported to have said, 'If the conditions of the chase are fairly fixed, there seems nothing to condemn.' Now I know how presumptuous it must seem in me to object to this condonation (though if you knew for how many years I have been pleading against field sports you would think it less presumptuous than it seems)—and I know too that when reformers run their heads against a universal custom, and not an excess beyond what

is universal, they get their heads broken and make no perceptible impression upon the custom. But though one may be impolitic and defeat one's object by what would seem to the popular mind an extreme and extravagant contention, I still think that there are strong grounds for not volunteering an acquittal of field sports within the limits of what the world calls 'fair conditions,' unless one has thoroughly satisfied oneself that there are such conditions, and also that the acquittal will not be construed in a larger sense than was intended, when it comes to be interpreted by each sportsman according to his own habits and habitual feelings.

The broad principle on which I rest my objection to all field sports is that amusement ought not to be found in that which inspires fear or inflicts pain. I have no objection to a butcher. It is his business to kill animals. It is a necessary business, and if he does what is necessary with the least possible infliction of suffering there is no fault to be found with him. And if any one were to make it his business in like manner to kill hares and pheasants for food and not for sport, I should have no objection to him either. Butchers are necessary, and hangmen and resurrection men are necessary. And killers of hares and pheasants may be necessary. But if a gentleman were to do a little butchery, or a little hanging, or a little body-snatching for his amusement, he would be considered a very brutal gentleman, because it is not customary ; and I cannot but think that sportsmen

would be regarded in the same light were it not that what they do is customary. I do not blame them personally, but I should blame them if they were not born and bred in a universal practice and approval of what they do—

> If damned custom had not brazed them so
> That they are proof and bulwark against sense.

I remember that about forty years ago the then Duke of St. Albans, Hereditary Grand Falconer, bethought him, by way of something new in sport, to fly a hawk at a heron, and the feelings of the public and the press were outraged. For they had not been accustomed to the flying of hawks at herons.

There is certainly a divided feeling about pigeon-shooting. I trust the right feeling will prevail before the hardening of custom shall have set in; and of one thing I am sure—that your Grace has given a heavy blow and a great discouragement to the wrong feeling.

Mr. Freeman (which of the two authors of that name I do not know) wrote a very able article against field sports in a magazine two or three years ago, and at the end of it quoted a poem of mine written in 1844. I enclose it for the chance of its finding favour in your sight—and not it only, but with it some shred or fraction of the doctrine it assumes to deliver.

May I ask you to give my remembrances to Mrs. Thompson, reminding her that we met many years

ago ? I know I have troubled you enough, and will only ask you to believe me,

My dear Lord Archbishop,
Yours very faithfully,
HENRY TAYLOR.

From Dr. John Brown to Henry Taylor.

23 Rutland Street, Edinburgh : July 27, 1874.

Dear Sir Henry Taylor,—Let me thank you for two great pleasures—for your letter and for your proof.[1] I agree with you as to 'Dora's Journal,'[2] but I like those lapses into level commonplace ; they are like the pauses of moorland in an intense highland landscape, and I never weary of her prattle. It is selling well, and there will be a second edition immediately. It is more than I expected. Our modern eaters of books like concentration and spiciness ; even Tennyson is more of a liqueur than of a wine, still less has he any of the leisureliness of Chaucer's nut-brown ale, with which you may smoke a pipe and ruminate. I am delighted with the proof more than I care to say. But why must you die before we get it? It will almost make us desire your death. I don't know when anything has pleased, has satisfied me so much. I have just read your lines on Edward Villiers—I read them long ago ; they are now alive, and impersonated ; and your lines to your wife. All that about Wordsworth and Coleridge is

[1] *I.e.* of a portion of Henry Taylor's *Autobiography*.
[2] Dorothy Wordsworth's *Recollections of a Tour in Scotland*.

most delightfully true. Wordsworth is lost in himself, and he too often drivels and talks numerous prose, and to a frightful extent; still he is the great imaginatively formative and expressive mind of this century. How I used to rejoice in 'The Statesman,' and to read to my wife 'The Statesman's wife.' She is gone, and was, I am sure, one of the women you would have loved and understood, and *vice versâ*. I was at Minto last week; Lord Minto is greatly better; your 'Nina'[1] very well and brilliant and good as ever; she always speaks of you as the father of her mind. They had a great misery the day after I left in the death, by drowning in the Teviot, of a young gardener.

I hope to meet your daughters there by-and-by. Why shouldn't their father and mother come with them? Seriously about the Autobiography, if it is all like this, why shouldn't it come out now? I put this quite seriously.

Miss Fenwick—I wish I knew more of her. She is Sara Coleridge's friend, and where are *her* letters? What a wonder of insight, understanding, knowledge, imagination, and critical *vis* and womanly sweetness, that Sara must have been! She justifies her father's existence, if it needed it. Must I return this proof? and am I to see no more of it till I or you die? That of Sydney Smith is delicious.

With much regard and much gratefulness,

Yours ever truly,

J. Brown.

[1] Lady Minto.

I let my cousin—my second self, see the proof. He was delighted. He has and knows all your books. I send you his 'Bibliomania,' which I am sure you and your friend De Vere will relish. That reading of Dante's 'Great Refusal' is his own.

I am thankful you took Southey's advice and your own, and kept the preface intact, even if for nothing else than 'persons impassioned, passions personified.'

From Henry Taylor to Dr. John Brown.

The Roost: July 31, 1874.

Dear Dr. Brown,—Your letter gave me much pleasure; if you knew how much, I am sure you would be glad to have written it. And it gave me encouragement also, which is much wanted for a work of this kind. You ask whether you are to see no more of it. If you and I were the only persons concerned, it would give me nothing but pleasure that you should see the whole of it, except that I am afraid the rest of it would not please you so much as what you have seen. But there are some pages now in the hands of the printer which might interest you equally, because they also relate to Wordsworth, and when they come to me in proof I will send them, and I will see then if there are any other sheets which I can send with them. You ask about Miss Fenwick's letters to Mrs. Henry Coleridge. I do not know what has become of them. They would not be doc-

trinal like her correspondent's, and may very likely contain nothing but what the circumstances of the moment gave birth to. Her letters to me generally contained nothing more, but occasionally a great deal more. I intend to make a selection from my correspondence if I should have time (not from my own letters only, but really from my correspondence), and select letters of Miss Fenwick would be amongst them. In the meantime, as you take an interest in her, I send you some stanzas relating to her which I wrote in or about the year 1828. Mrs. H. Coleridge was all that you say. But what a misfortune it is that those two portraits (so-called) of her have been preserved, and presented to those who have not known and seen her beauty, and cannot conceive or understand the defamation of it which those painters have been guilty of! Even her uncle Southey was not more libelled of painters. Lord Byron said of him that 'to have his head and shoulders he would almost have written his Sapphics.' But what is given in most of the portraits is no more like the head and shoulders than it is like a cod's head and shoulders —not so much. Many thanks for the pleasant extract from Ruskin's letter. No, I do not know him. I have met him once, but not so as to know him. And more than many for your cousin's 'Bibliomania.' From the little I have yet read of it I know I shall like it much. I am very glad that my daughters are to meet you at Minto. They will be delighted to make your acquaintance, and through

them I shall feel as if I had some personal acquaintance with you.

Believe me

Ever yours sincerely,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Henry Taylor to James Spedding.

The Roost, Bournemouth : September 21, 1874.

My dear Spedding,—I came to the end of the 'Life and Letters,' vol. vii.,[1] this morning. My first reading of most, my third of some of it. Criticisms are of no use now, and, were they of ever so much, I should have little to say in abatement of the *almost* unqualified admiration with which I regard your summings up. In two or three places there is, I think, a subtlety of distinction, or a straining of a plea which will a little interfere with the general effect; but the general effect will be, I hope, to inspire confidence, and this effect will be not so much from the examination you invite as from the opinions you have formed, and the reliance that will be placed in them. I am aware that what you look forward to is a percolation through short and popular biographies, and I know that most writers on such themes like to set up for themselves, and not to appear to follow a lead. But I think they will manage to wear this appearance without substantial divergence from your track. If they were not to accept your authority in

[1] *I.e.* of the *Life and Letters of Bacon.*

matters of inference on the ground of your deeper knowledge and life-long deliberation, there would be much to perplex them, for the documentary basis is not enough. It is necessary to understand the manners and language of the time. What would seem an extravagance of flattery in our times seems to have been the customary mode of addressing great men one, two, or three centuries ago. The most ordinary dedications of books a hundred and fifty or two hundred years ago would seem not only fulsome but ridiculous now. In Bacon's time the words 'love' and 'affection' meant, did they not, what we should call goodwill or friendly feeling? The letters to Buckingham and the King must be read with a vocabulary if they are not to make an unfavourable impression. Buckingham especially was unworthy of anything more than a charitable goodwill from such a man as Bacon. But he again must be tried by the standard of an age in which almost all men who succeeded in life so well as to gain a prominent position seem to have been of a low moral type. I do not think that the toleration, by a judge, of letters requesting him to show favour to suitors can be justified on the ground that nothing more was understood than a request for attention or expedition in disposing of the suit; but I can believe that justice to the suitor by the judge in those days was regarded as no more sacred than justice to the public by a patron in these: and from these days, going back, whither my recollection carries me, to the days before the reform

of Parliament, if it is true that 'kissing goes by favour,' it is assuredly not less true that appointments in which important public interests were involved were constantly made which went by nothing else. And a hundred years hence, if some future Macaulay shall discover that a person of indifferent character and abilities was appointed to an important Colonial Government only to please Lord Lonsdale, I suppose dear old Lord Bathurst will be called, though not the brightest or the wisest, yet unquestionably the meanest of mankind. And yet, if any justification had been thought necessary in Lord Bathurst's time, there would have been an easy sophistry at hand. Lord Lonsdale commanded thirty votes in the House of Commons. Defy him and a few other such patrons of boroughs, and what would be the consequence? Whigs, Radicals, revolution, civil war, destruction, and chaos come again. Better do an injustice to some public interests than bring ruin upon all. Then pass from Lord Bathurst and Lord Lonsdale to Bacon and Buckingham. Buckingham had his hand on the helm of the State; Bacon had his hand on Buckingham's hand. Take his hand off, and what would follow? Just what did follow—Puritans, Roundheads, rebellion, civil war, subversion of the throne. Rather than that, do a little favour to one suitor and a little less than justice to another. Sophistical no doubt, and, as it proved, the better chance of keeping his hand both on the helmsman and on the helm would have been by maintaining his own

reputation as one who administered justice without respect of persons ; but probably no one would have guessed it before the fact. I do not know whether Buckingham has incurred so much obloquy by asking for undue favours in a case like that of Dr. Steward as Bacon has incurred by granting it. But it seems to me that Bacon had some shadow of excuse, however sophistical, and Buckingham had none. I think that the case which gives me the most unfavourable opinion of Bacon is the evolution by which he converted his fine into a protection from his creditors, and in this Buckingham and the King were, I suppose, implicated. And if Buckingham's application for York House meant the payment of a fair price for it, Bacon seems chargeable with refusing what might have helped to pay his debts, as well as with maintaining a magnificent abode and manner of living to the injury of his creditors, whilst complaining of misery and want.

I have felt a great desire to write a review of the work ; and if I leave my Autobiography where it stands, as I am half inclined to do at present, I think I could manage it. I am too old to do both.

Ever yours,

Henry Taylor.

From Aubrey de Vere to Henry Taylor.

Bellagio : October 2, 1874.

My dear Henry,—About this time some thirty-one years ago I wrote you a letter when on the Lake of Como, and I had left you to run up to Milan in order to enquire for our letters. How strange it seems to look back on those old times ! There is a good deal to sadden one, of course, in such retrospection, but there is a great deal more that is not saddening ; and the feeling, I think, that preponderates is gratitude. How many good things have been accorded since those old days! How much which could not then have been reasonably looked forward to, but which one would have hailed with such delight if one had then been told that it was to have been granted! Certainly human life, with all its drawbacks, is a beautiful thing, though that beauty which in youth we suppose to be of the radiant order turns out to be, in a large measure, a pathetic beauty—not that the two things are inconsistent.

In my wanderings about these lovely shores yesterday your poem on the Lago Lugano was constantly singing itself in my head ; and I was much struck by the rapidity with which, at once on reaching Italy, you had taken in the Italian character, and that ' inward freedom of the mind ' which belonged to it through the grace of charity and humility, even in those days when ' civil liberty '

there was none, as the term is commonly understood. Perhaps the kindliness and quiet self-respect, the reflex from mutual respect, which one sees here in every one, and which made it equally pleasant to converse with the old and with children, were the more striking to me because I had recently come from one of those parts of Switzerland in which industrialism has been lately rushing ahead, and in which consequently good manners do not prevail any more than the moral temper which produces them; for if the 'go-ahead' fury does not leave men 'leisure to be wise,' neither does it leave them leisure to be courteous. When people cross each other in railway trains running different ways, there is no time for them to take off their hats.

I suppose it is hardly reasonable to hope that Italy may get the good she lacked, and not lose any part of that which she always had. However, I do not take a desponding view of Italy's future, much as I must regret some of the things which were done while creating the new order of things. I suppose that in most revolutions a great deal that is wrong —and indeed a great deal that is base—takes place, which is forgotten when it has turned out a success. From the time when I was first in Italy I felt convinced that the political evils of despotic government are less than those which result from its tendency to enervate the character, even when that character resists its tendency to produce worse corruptions; and I was always longing for the time when Italy should be both exempt from foreign dominion and

from native despotism. It would have been a glorious thing if this had been effected without stimulating a war on the part of liberty against religion. From all I hear, however, it would seem as if, in the long run, religion were likely to gain more than she will lose through the rough usage she has met; and the Italians are so keen-witted that even their statesmen will discover before long that, though the anarchist might wish for the permanence of an estrangement between Church and State, constitutional *monarchy* has everything to fear from it. . . .

Ever affectionately yours,

AUBREY DE VERE.

From G. S. Venables to Henry Taylor.

6 Bolton Row, Mayfair: January 14, 1875.

My dear Taylor,—I had no opportunity of telling you how much I was interested in the Autobiography. I very much wish that you may be induced to continue it. The present volume ends about the date of my first coming to London, so that I feel only partially a contemporary.

To me the most interesting character in the book is your father, who must have been one of the few people—perhaps not very few—who live a completely intellectual life without a need of fame or even of communication with their equals. Of my acquaintance more or less were Lord Monteagle, —— and ——, and Lady Ashburton, whom for two or three years I knew as well as any one knew her. I

thought more of —— than you seem to have done, especially of a kind of playfulness and simplicity which are in great scholars preserved by their coating of a love of useless knowledge, which he had in the strongest degree. There is no quality more purely intellectual, or which goes better with a fine nature. —— was the most amiable of men, and all the more so because he had an outlet for all the malice, hatred, and uncharitableness—which might otherwise have been diffused—in Gladstone, whom he never mentioned without bitterness or ridicule. You know Gladstone and I don't, and I have no doubt he is very well worth knowing; but surely you do Palmerston an injustice in putting him below Gladstone as a Minister. It seems to me that he had the judgment and firmness which the other emphatically wants. Not that I put Palmerston in the highest rank; but I should put Gladstone low among statesmen, though high among orators and financiers.

What I like best in your book, among many good things, is the English. I was much struck with the style of the passage which you read out about Greville; and, as I expected, I found the rest of the book equal to it. I believe it would be worth while to cultivate poetry, if only as the best way of learning to write prose; not that that was exactly the highest object and result of 'Philip van Artevelde.' As I am going out of town, I may probably not see you again at present, and therefore I write.

Yours sincerely,

G. S. Venables.

From Henry Taylor to G. S. Venables.

January 14, 1875.

My dear Venables,—I am sorry we are to see no more of you. What we have seen has been very pleasant.

Your comments on my book are of course very interesting to me. My wife says you had thoughts of giving me your own views of Lady Ashburton in a letter. I wish you would. I feel how little can be known of her by what I have written, and yet I did not find the way to write more. As to Gladstone and Palmerston, you are more likely to be right than I in an estimate of statesmen, my knowledge of the subject-matter with which they deal having always been very imperfect; but I am much surprised at learning that you would put the latter above the former in any capacity except that of tactician. I should put him down, down below 'full fathom five.' The mind of the one seems to me a sort of ocean in which the other's mind might duck and dive and frisk almost unobserved. But I dare say I underrate Lord Palmerston from want of knowledge of the qualities required for the large measure of success as a Minister which he undoubtedly achieved.

Ever yours sincerely,

H. T.

From Henry Taylor to Lord Blachford.

The Roost, Bournemouth : March 21, 1875.

My dear Blachford,—'With reference' (as we used to say in Downing Street) to unconscious cerebration, I remember being more than fifty years ago struck with a phenomenon I observed in myself, and which is, I dare say, common enough, that of being spoken to when I was in a fit of what is called absence of mind, without any immediate recognition of what was said, and shortly after, when my mind came back, knowing every word; and I made use of it in 'Isaac Comnenus' to illustrate a vivid presentation of the memory, after many years, of the minute features of a scene witnessed in a trance of emotion in which those features had been incapable of attracting attention :

> I can remember now each circumstance
> Which then I scarce was conscious of; like words
> That leave upon the still susceptive sense
> A message undelivered till the mind
> Awakes to apprehensiveness and takes it !

But the treatment of such subjects which I like best of all is in a song which I showed you some years ago called 'Stuart Mill on Mind and Matter.' I have always wondered whether that song would live like those in the 'Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin,' or pass away as a fugitive piece, and, as I have never heard it spoken of by any one, and I don't know who is its author or whether he is an author with works to

which it might adhere, I am in some fear that it may be blown into the ditch like any other fallen leaf. I send it that you may show it to Froude, as the best return I can make for the pleasure I and my girls have had in reading his letter. Lady Blachford was present, I think, when we read the song long ago, but will you show it to your sisters? And *pray* return it.

I have been occupied since I left London with a revision of 'Edwin the Fair' and 'Isaac Comnenus.' The latter I have corrected and amplified in almost every page. My ear and hand were unpractised when I wrote it, and, though the action gets on well enough, it is often thin and meagre in its poetry. It is odd that I should think myself fitter at seventy-five than at twenty-five, but I do; I am going on now to the 'Sicilian Summer' and 'St. Clement's Eve,' but I shall not find that I shall have much to give of what they may want. Aubrey de Vere wishes me to throw in something in a more poetic and expatiating vein to retard the action of 'St. Clement's Eve.'

Ever yours affectionately,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Henry Taylor to the Countess of Minto.

The Roost: March 30, 1875.

. . . Since we came here I have been very busy in the revision of my plays ('Van Artevelde' excepted) for a new edition. 'Isaac Comnenus' required a great

deal of correction ; the later plays not so much. But Aubrey de Vere exhorted me to retard the action of 'St. Clement's Eve,' which he considers to be too rapid, and I found a place at the end of the third act, where I thought a quiet scene could be introduced with advantage, provided it were lighter than what went before and softer than what followed ; and I was meditating on a scene and a song accordingly, and the persons were to be Geoffrey De Laval, the page of the Duke of Orleans, murdered in the fifth act whilst trying to prevent the murder of his master, and Eustace d'Estivet, the Duke's somewhat sentimental minstrel, who appears in act ii. sc. 1. I had some natural doubts, however, about the way in which a *lyrical* impulse was to come to a man in his seventy-fifth year, when something occurred which was just what I wanted. I was reading to a friend of the girls' who was staying with us a passage in the 'Life of Hugh Elliot,' which is one of my pet passages, and after I went to bed it occurred to me that stealing is an excellent resource for a man in difficulties, and that I could make a song of it. So the scene and the song were written, and I enclose copies. You need not return them.[1] . . .

[1] The song will be found in *St. Clement's Eve*, act iii. sc. 6.

From Henry Taylor to Lord Blachford.

The Roost, Bournemouth : April 13, 1875.

My dear Blachford,—I recognise the general truth of what you say about revision of poems or plays written long ago. What may be said on the other side is that, till all the faculties decay, perhaps the harmonising faculty gains rather than loses by lapse of time. All my plays have been revised at long intervals for each succeeding edition, and I think they have been the better for it. But with the exception of 'Isaac Comnenus,' which was originally a meagre play, I think the revision has not led to the interpolation of bits from my commonplace book for their own sakes, but only to engrafting or supplanting or developing where I perceived a fault or a want. I can hardly say that I do perceive the want of the drag in 'St. Clement's Eve,' but I think the play will not be the worse for a little pause at the end of the third act, where there occurs, I think, in most plays, a resting-point to precede a fresh start, and I enclose a scene and a song which I wrote last week. The object of it is, whilst throwing something soft and slow by way of contrast with what goes before and what follows, to give a forecast of the fate of Geoffrey De Laval, the Duke's page, and so connect one feature of the catastrophe with a previous stage of the story. I have done scarcely anything to 'St. Clement's Eve' except this (p. 109), and to the 'Sicilian Summer' except the conversion (pp. 83, 84)

of the scene between Jews when waylaying the King from prose into verse. I find that, in dramatic composition, what is colloquial and prosaic needs the support of verse more than what is not.

I know not what the spring is with you in Devonshire ; with us it is as unamiable as I have ever known it. And so far as it addresses itself to the eye, it is less attractive at Bournemouth than elsewhere. Some one said that the 'resurrection of Nature' was not seen at Bournemouth, and somebody else replied, that that was owing to the evergreens planted over Nature's grave.

Ever yours affectionately,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Henry Taylor to Lady Pollock.

The Roost, August 7, 1875.

My dear Lady Pollock,—I have just come to the end of your 'Théâtre Français,' and I think you never did anything better than that. That a theatre should have a history is quite new to me ; but you will say there are a good many things that are new to *me*. I remember at one of Rogers's breakfasts a hundred years ago some one (Southey, I think) quoting what Dodsley had said in answer to 'I don't know *that*,' 'Sir, what you don't know would make a big book.'

The cold statue of the Greek Muse is a statue which I think I never could have kissed, even if it

had not been out of my reach, but neither have I been able to kiss what Corneille made of it. Perhaps the form of verse would have been enough to repulse me. But there are other formalities, and even in Alfieri's plays which I did read I could find no pleasure except in the 'Filippo' and the 'Saul,' in which he departs from his own models. But my readings in this kind were in my earliest youth (about fifty-five years ago), and perhaps at a more mature age I might have read to better purpose.

Your 'Judgment of Paris' theme will have its dangers as well as its difficulties. When I read writings which are purely and exclusively critical I often feel as if the writer was finding something to say rather than saying what had occurred to him ; and the effect on me is that of a sort of super-subtlety and false depth, and I say to myself, 'This may be all very true or may not, who can tell?' The article on 'Queen Mary' in this same number of the 'Quarterly' contains a good deal of this sort of professional criticism. I remember Landseer telling me that he did not value the opinion of artists about pictures so much as the opinion of persons who were not artists. I understood from that that he valued impressions more than thinkings. I think I do too.

I have not got at the 'Temple Bar' yet. But I shall. As to 'The Poet and the Stage,' I don't know what the stage is like at present, not having been in the inside of a theatre for many years; but it seems to me that these times abound in poetry of a high order.

Within the last two or three months copies have been sent me of three volumes of poetry, each of which I think in other times would have taken a high place—'Timoleon,' by James Rhoades; 'Preludes,' by Elizabeth Thompson; and 'Sonnets and Songs,' by 'Proteus.' I do not know whether in these times they make their way through the crowd. I begin to think that I for one ought to get out of their way. Whereas Messrs. H. King & Co. are bent upon publishing a collective edition of my works in prose and verse, and if some residues can be got rid of, they will do so without delay. Old 'Philip' goes on just as he has done for forty years, selling about 200 copies *per annum*, 400 being left of an edition of 1,000 published by Smith & Elder in the spring of 1872. This residue is the only obstacle to the collective edition, which must wait, I think, for a couple of years; though, being now close upon seventy-five years of age, I ought not to lose much time in getting my house in order, and I have been doing a good deal in the way of correction this last year or two, even writing new songs where they were wanted.

Just at present, when I ought to be writing an epithalamium, I am much more in the mood for writing a threnody. I wish it was all over.

Ever yours,

H. Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to Sir F. Elliot.

The Roost, Bournemouth : April 18, 1876.

I have no doubt I shall be much interested in the 'Life of Macaulay.' The life of such a man cannot but be interesting even to those (I am one of them) who have not an *ardent* admiration of his writings. His style is excellent of its kind—clear, strong, pointed, and compact. But I think there are better kinds, and that his would have been better had it been more diversified. What I feel about his 'History' is, that whereas all genuine history must, in the nature of things, be thickly sown with difficulties and doubts, in his 'History' there are none, or next to none, to be found. But it is delightfully easy reading, and especially pleasant to readers who do not like to be puzzled. Have you read Spedding's article in the last 'Contemporary'? It is singularly trenchant and bright, and it was great luck for him that such a writer as Dr. Abbott should have reproduced Macaulay on Bacon, so that he should not seem to be speaking 'De Mortuis' only. There is always some sort of odium attached to exposing the errors of a man recently dead, though it should be in vindication of a man more distantly dead, whose errors of a more serious kind that man had assumed to expose. Milton braved the odium in his 'Iconoclastes,' saying of Charles I.: 'To him, as in his book alive, shall be used no more courtship than he useth.' And perhaps there is no real, or at least

no sufficient, reason to the contrary. And there is this to be said in favour of controverting the errors of the recently dead, that there are presumably those alive who will be his advocates, so that he is not likely to be condemned unheard.

From James Spedding to Henry Taylor.

80 Westbourne Terrace : May 14, 1876.

I have read Macaulay's 'Life and Letters,' and am much troubled in mind to think how I have behaved to him, and what amends I can make. The 'Evenings with a Reviewer' cannot be effectually withdrawn, for copies have got about into unknown places; and yet I don't like to think of myself as speaking of such a man as he was, in the tone in which I spoke in those Dialogues. It has occurred to me that I might turn those into a set of *Notes* upon his essay, omitting unimportant objections, and giving the substance of the important ones in a style more accordant with the feeling which I now have for the man. Not that I ever thought ill of him personally : I always believed that he was fighting on behalf of virtue, even when he was most mistaken and fought most unfairly. But I had no idea of the tenderness which we now find was the predominant element in his mental constitution. And I cannot yet understand how it contrived to show so little of itself in his writings. He was a favourite writer with me for many years : I used to accept all his

judgments, and believe in all his statements, and sympathise with all his emotions; but I do not remember that my affections were ever appealed to. He could applaud and admire, but his nature did not seem to have any affinity for what was affecting in the characters he expounded. He did not seem to find it out in them ; and yet he was overflowing with it all the time himself in relation to real people, and also to the creatures of other people's imagination. But, however it came about, the feeling must have been there, and the man must be treated accordingly. I suppose the same substantial criticism would take the shape of friendly and respectful expostulation, if one *felt* friendly and respectful. And perhaps this Abbott controversy may give occasion for some collection of replies to the charges urged by Macaulay, which I had passed by as sufficiently answered by the corrected statement of the facts.

From Henry Taylor to James Spedding.

Bournemouth : May 14, 1876.

My dear Spedding,—I am very glad that you feel about Macaulay in his 'Life and Letters' as I do.[1]

[1] In a letter of May 9, 1876, to James Spedding, Sir Henry Taylor had written :—'I have been reading Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*, and though it does not touch the question of Macaulay's dealings with Bacon, or the feelings with which they should be regarded, it does entirely change my conceptions of Macaulay as a man, and my feelings towards him regarded in his relations with his living fellow-creatures. Nature had sent him into the world without the credential to which he was entitled. He did not look what he was.'

And I am glad also that you contemplate an exposition of his errors tempered by that feeling.

For some time past I have seemed to myself to perceive that the plan of your work involved more difficulties and imperfections than I had recognised whilst it was in progress. Facts do not always speak the truth. They may be truly related, and yet, without the context of other truths or facts, they may convey to most minds what is not the truth. And then the question is how much of the context of facts, doubtful or ascertained, and bearing one way or another, should be imported into the relation. And this will be sometimes a doubtful and difficult question, and the determination of it may involve as much of an advocacy as an argument involves. In some cases evidence of fact may go to the jury, and they will be sure to go right; in others, omit a summing-up by the judge, and they will be sure to go wrong; especially if they have read the newspapers.

'I, much meditating upon these things'—as Lord Brougham said in one of his harangues—have had for some time past a great desire that, having adduced the evidence, you should put the crown upon your work by a summing-up, showing the full force of the advocacy on one side and the other, dispelling doubts where there need be none, and leaving the doubts which remain, with as just a measure as can be arrived at of the confidence or diffidence with which one or another hypothetical judgment can be formed. Whether this could be best done by notes

on Macaulay's 'Essays' I hardly know. That would put you in the attitude of an advocate.

Ever yours,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Sir Frederick Elliot to Henry Taylor.

7 Onslow Square, S.W.: December 2, 1876.

My dear Taylor,—I don't at all admire the forthcoming mutual admiration meeting, summoned by men of letters chiefly, about the affairs of the East. Their taking the name of a 'Conference,' and selecting the expected day of the first meeting of the real Conference backed by a million of armed men, strikes me as a burlesque, and a body of authors ought not to have forgotten the fable of the bull and the frog. As a nephew of mine wittily says, it is like Landseer's picture of 'Dignity and Impudence.' In the next place I think that *literati*, when they have not been exercised in practical affairs, are the worst of politicians. In the unusual position of addressing contemporaries on contemporary events, their heads are turned, they are apt to be vain and irritable, and are so much vexed by their pursuits in the past that they confound the dead and the living. To the evil passions of their own generation they add the extinct hatreds and resentments of bygone ages. Look at Freeman; he digs into forgotten records and finds that the ancestors of some people oppressed the ancestors of another four hundred years ago; upon

which he forthwith exhorts their descendants, living in peace and amity, to hate each other now. Another is more moderate; he only unearths the misgovernment of a hundred years ago as a present motive for mutual detestation. And with these sentiments, they stand forth on a stage, and we are to worship them as the apostles of benevolence. No, I say, deliver us from the charity of angry pedants.

Above all, I dislike the general *itch* at this moment in England to seize upon the reins, and usurp the functions of Government, being well convinced that of all rulers the worst are amateur rulers.

And so, having in these remarks displayed my own moderation and amiability, I will add no more than that.

I am yours ever,

T. Frederick Elliot.

From Sir Frederick Elliot to Henry Taylor.

7 Onslow Square, S.W.: December 6, 1876.

My dear Taylor,—Your letter reached me late last night, at the end of a dreary day, during which I had been obliged by a passing illness to keep the house. Its first welcome effect was to give me a long and hearty laugh at your answer to the invitation to you to deliver a speech at the intended meeting in London. Your excuse was indeed undeniable. Not that I doubt that if you had condemned the example

of the blush roses, you would have given the meeting a very good speech.

My next feeling was of a different kind. I had written to you before as the grumbling spectator of an affair in which neither you nor I had any direct concern; but when I saw the thing put as a practical question addressed to yourself by an honourable fellow evidently in great earnest, I felt a certain remorse for the careless way in which I had tossed off to you my *skit* at the undertaking itself and all its promoters. The truth is that in some respects my own view of the matter has been undergoing change.

In the first place, so many and such important politicians have joined the movement, that one can no longer regard the literary partners in it as intruding by themselves into a domain not their own. In the next place, I should think it a subject of great regret if, after all that has passed, the mere advance of Russia into Bulgaria were treated as a cause for this country making war, and probably large demonstrations by the people may best disabuse any old-fashioned member of the Government of the idea that it would be generally wished, and best support other members of the Government in maintaining the contrary view. Blachford's argument to this effect, which you felt so convincing, is, I have good reasons of my own for knowing, well founded in fact. On the whole, therefore, I am reconciled to the fact of the meeting.

I shall continue to regret that they stole the

name of the greater firm at Constantinople—an offence punishable at law in this country. So many poets, critics, and other writers, ought at least to have shown taste in the use of words. To insist on decking themselves in the lion's skin was a needless suggestion of the other animal, which I by no means expect that they will resemble.

On the main question I cannot be so sanguine as those who have heretofore been so proud in this country of crying out for what is to be wished, instead of considering what can be done. Those countries are inhabited by people who are all barbarous together, Christians and Mahommedans alike. The latter, being in the ascendant, are the most cruel; the former, being in subjection, are the most debased. I do not believe that at this present moment the Christians are one whit better than the Mahommedans, but I do firmly believe that they are more improvable, and may some day become real Christians, and therefore I am on their side.

Now, then, what is to be done? The project of self-government is a sham, and a refuge for those who will not face the real problem. We might as well talk of bestowing self-government on the Kilkenny cats.

They must be ruled by some one else, and practically there are but two rulers at hand, the Turks and the Russians. Now, the Turks misgovern subject races, and the Russians exterminate them. They have strangled Poland and depopulated Circassia.

The choice we have is not promising. By the time that all the aliens are dead or exiled, I believe that Russians govern the Russians who are substituted for them better than the Turks govern Turks. As soon, therefore, as all the people with whom we are so warmly sympathising shall have been extinguished, we may have the satisfaction of feeling that other people living in the same countries are better governed ; and if our affection is for particular degrees of latitude and longitude, this will be a comfortable reflection. Otherwise it is but an indifferent solace to our feelings of humanity. Where wishing is the order of the day, I could wish that such people as inhabit the disturbed provinces had never been born, but I own that I have more hesitation about wishing that they were all destroyed.

All this I do sincerely feel to be very mournful, and I shall be very glad if so much genius, accomplishment, and at last it appears, experience assembled at St. James's Hall shall be able to point out to us the road to some better issue.—Ever yours,

T. Fred. Elliot.

From Sir Frederick Elliot to Henry Taylor.

7 Onslow Square : December 23, 1876.

My dear Taylor,—Thank you for letting me see your letter to the Dean of St. Paul's *in transitu.* It contains a great deal in that small compass, and I am glad of having had the opportunity to read it.

Seldom has a more ambiguous new year dawned upon us than is now approaching. Peace or war—I mean as between Russia and Turkey—is the immediate question. If I were forced to make a guess for one or the other, it would be decidedly for the less favourable issue, and that mainly upon a ground excellently put by Blachford in a letter he has kindly taken the trouble to write to me. When two Powers have armed to the teeth, and roused the passions of their people, the probability is always on the side of a conflict. Both parties, I believe, are already beginning to repent; but it is too late, and what the ancients called Fate—that is to say, the necessary development of powerful causes—once set in motion will run its baleful course.

In this question of peace or war, the great difficulty appears to me that Turkey, having been indisputably victorious, is called upon to behave as if she were vanquished. If the whole of Europe combine with Russia to impose that result upon her, in defiance of the usual and natural course of public events, it will be a fresh partition of Poland—the dismemberment of an Empire by an overweening confederacy of its neighbours, and to that extent, at all events, the substitution of might for right. If Europe declines, as I believe it will, that bare and undisguised assertion of the dominion of sheer force, Russia will have to act alone, Turkey will resist, and at once the war begins.

Poor, conceited nineteenth century, always sing-

ing its own praises! Exactly in the middle of it we opened our first International Exhibition as the temple of Peace never more to be broken. The struggle now impending, if it does occur, will be the *seventh* great war since that inauguration of the era of universal brotherhood.

What we may boast of is, that we have done a great deal with coal and iron, have made unexpected uses of the vapour of water, and have employed chemistry to make pictures and electricity to carry messages; but the human passions—where are the conquests over them? An ingenious generation I admit; but before being so much wiser and better as it supposes than its predecessors, I am afraid that it is going to earn and to receive many fresh applications of the scourge.

Ever yours,

T. Frederick Elliot.

I need scarcely say that I have only been speaking of a compulsory foreign occupation of provinces which have not been conquered. I admit the right and the duty of the civilised world to insist on a better government of those provinces, and on proper securities against the repetition of horrors. But if all were sincere, I believe that this could now be attained without wresting territory from one Power in order to transfer it to another which up to the very latest times has shown itself more intolerant and equally cruel.

And, at all events, as an anticipation of matter of fact, I reckon that the consequence of the attempt will be war.

From Henry Taylor to Lord Blachford.

February 6, 1877.

I have not seen the book about the Russian Communes. As to the question you ask yourself, whether the time will come when the world will look on inequality of fortune (then extinct) with the same undoubting reprobation with which we now look on slavery, I should say that if the time can come in which the round world will be a flat world, then the time can come in which inequalities will cease. And if inequalities of Nature do not cease, inequalities of fortune may go to the devil without equalising the condition of mankind in the most essential relations of life. The world would still be a world of mountains, hills, hummocks, and plains. What inequalities of fortune ought to do, and will come to do, and I hope have come to do in a large measure, though not so large as one could wish, is to interpose themselves throughout the inequalities of Nature, and soften or avert their collision. Inequalities of health, of strength, of stature, of beauty, of energy, of intellect, are the less naked and abrupt in their impact on each other by reason of inequalities of fortune. So at least it seems to me ; Nature and Fortune being both children of God, and intended to work together as brothers.

From Henry Taylor to Mrs. C. Earle.

The Roost: May 6, 1877.

Dearest Theresa,—. . . I think you said you had been reading Miss Martineau's Autobiography. So have I. But I think with a different feeling. I have been reading the second volume, the first not being at hand. It is written with ability, and there is much in it that is instructive and something that is interesting; but my interest is rather in the other subjects of which she writes than in the woman. She is undoubtedly honest and truthful; but I have seldom seen truth and honesty made to wear so repulsive an aspect; and this through what seems to me a pervading connection of it with presumption and pride. I get rather tired of her perpetual 'principles,' and in her devotion to truth I think she makes a mistake, not altogether uncommon, of what it is that she ought to be devoted to—mixing up one with another of the divers meanings of the word. It is often a very misleading word from this diversity of meaning. In the sense of veracity, it is of course what we all regard as sacred, and so also in the kindred senses of loyalty, fidelity, constancy, and so forth. But it takes quite a different rank when it means merely correctness of statement, reality of fact, or justness of inference or of opinion. When we say that we are bound to tell the truth, if we mean only that we are bound not to tell lies, there is no doubt about that; but if we mean that we are

bound to declare or inculcate whatever we believe to be truth in matter of inference or opinion, there may be a good deal of doubt. Miss Martineau seems to me to confound the questionable with the unquestionable obligation. If a doctor has a patient whose malady he believes to be mortal, but whose sufferings would be dreadfully aggravated if he knew it to be so, he is not bound to tell him that truth, though he may be bound to say nothing to the contrary. Perhaps Miss Martineau, when she declares her atheism and supports it with arguments, has been enabled to persuade herself that a world of atheists would be a happier world than a world of Christians, and that it was her duty to inculcate atheism accordingly. And it may be said that if she held this opinion she was right to act upon it, which I do not dispute. But I should like to know how she came by such an opinion. Opinions may be held and acted upon in all truth and sincerity, and at the same time there may be a derivative, if not a direct, responsibility for pernicious opinions, inasmuch as the mind in which they are formed may have been in its previous course corrupted by vanity or by bad sympathies or bad antipathies, so as to think in all truth and honesty what an incorrupt mind could not think. I see no reason to impute to Miss Martineau any bad sympathies or bad antipathies in the formation of her mind, and, as I have said, I have not yet read her first volume ; but what I have read gives me the impression of a mind pervaded and perverted by intellectual

arrogance and vanity and pride ; the result being the ordinary one, of a mind renouncing the authority of opinions prevailing around it and founding itself on itself for better or worse. And although there are, no doubt, signal and illustrious examples of minds which were in the right in so founding themselves, yet I believe that the exceptions of this kind are few, and the rule is that nothing more surely corrupts the justness of the intellect than to live in oppugnancy with what surrounds it. Now if, with the largeness of a just and genial humility starting from the fair presumption in favour of opinions held by the great majority of minds of a higher order of power and cultivation, Miss Martineau was convinced, as she proceeded, that they were mistaken, and that there is no God and no future life, I consider her to be blameless in so thinking ; and if, proceeding farther in the like spirit, she thought also that the minds of this order, and the multitudes who agree with them, are mistaken in regarding their belief as their chief support in preferring virtue to vice, the chief joy of their lives in their weal, and their chief consolation when they are afflicted, then I hold her blameless also in endeavouring to evict them of their errors ; but the impression I have received is that she was a person who was a good deal occupied with herself, and, through self-occupation and self-sufficiency, unconsciously betrayed into believing that views which were false and narrow were true and broad, and betrayed also into the belief that she was think-

ing and acting in a spirit of philanthropy when that was not the sentiment really or mainly in possession of her.

The earlier portion of her book will, of course, throw most light upon the origin and construction of her mind and ways of thinking, and when I get hold of it I may find myself mistaken ; but provisionally, and assuming the first volume to tell the same story as the second, I take this view of her rather strongly.

Or perhaps when the wind changes I shall be more charitable, for it is in the bitter east still, and I see in the 'Pall Mall Gazette' that the Serpentine is frozen over—ice half an inch thick on the 5th May ! How can one keep one's temper ? But when the south-west wind comes, or when you come, I shall take an indulgent view of Miss Martineau and everybody else. God bless you, dear !

Ever yours affectionately,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Henry Taylor to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

The Roost, Bournemouth : September 30, 1877.

My dear Gladstone,—May I make one suggestion of one supplement to one sentence of an admirable speech ?

'It is monstrous to place on the same footing the cruelties of the oppressed and the cruelties of the oppressor.'

I would add : ' Let me not be misunderstood as offering any excuse for retaliation. Let us never forget that the cruelties of revenge are hateful and detestable as well as the cruelties of oppression ; that they are blind in their fury ; that the Turkish women and children who were amongst the victims had not been amongst the oppressors ; and that the relations of man with man and of man with God are first and foremost, whatever may be the relations of peoples with peoples. All that I mean is that, in considering questions of policy, and how to deal with one nation and race or another, it is monstrous to place on the same footing the race or nation which has given occasion for revengeful cruelties and crimes with the race or nation which has been betrayed into committing them.'

I hope mine is not your forty-sixth letter of to-day, but, as very possibly it may be, I will say no more.

Believe me ever yours sincerely,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone to Henry Taylor.[1]

October 2, 1877.

You set me on counting, and it was the fiftieth by to-day's post.

But if it had been the hundred and fiftieth the

[1] A post-card.

sight of your handwriting would have been a pleasure only second to that of your personal arrival.

I think your observation just, and to every word of the suggestion I subscribe.

In making successive speeches on a wide subject it becomes almost a necessity that what is explained fully on one occasion shall only be touched cursorily, and almost parenthetically on others.

In my penultimate speech on the Eastern Question about three weeks ago, I had stated fully and strongly my sense upon the atrocities against Turkish women and children.

With many thanks,

Always sincerely yours,

W. E. G.

From Henry Taylor to the Countess of Minto.

The Roost: October 4, 1877.

Well, dear Nina, I will let you off, but I should like to hang the forty thieves who have robbed me of your letters. I wonder which is worst—your forty people in the house daily, or Gladstone's forty-six letters? He tells me they went up to fifty the day before yesterday. I think your case is worse than his, for there is no waste-basket into which you could put the people if you chose. One thing, however, I am very glad of—that the Blachfords' visit was not wasted upon you, nor upon them, as you may see by the enclosed, if you like to read them.

It is a great pleasure to me to have brought you two together. We in our small way have had more guests than usual this year. Alice is always afraid of them till they arrive, and always glad of them when they are here. Into the forecasts divers difficulties find their way—dulness to them; the discontent, if not of mistresses, of maids; and sad miscarriages in the matters of meat and drink. I care for none of these things, or I am ready to risk them. If my friends find it dull, I call to mind Miss Fenwick's doctrine that occasional dulness is good for us, and I trust that my friends will be much the better for it. If the ladies' maids find themselves descending into low life for a few days, I trust they will prize all the more the exalted scale to which they have been accustomed. And if the dinners are not fit to be eaten, I bethink myself that 'fasting, it is angels' food,' and, as I always believe my friends to be angels, I make up my mind that what they get is just the thing for them.

I have been occupied almost entirely this year, and shall be to the end of it, with the preparation of my collective edition for the press. The three volumes of plays and poems are in print, and the first was published a few days ago—on the first of the month. The other four are to follow on the first of each successive month; and I have much still to do to the prose works. I have been using up as many as I can find a place for (some hundreds) of the notes in my commonplace books which had not

yet been turned to account. The motto to my first commonplace book—dated I don't know when, but some time in my youth—was from Shakespeare ('Troilus and Cressida,' I think), 'Let us throw away nothing, for we may live to have need of such a verse.' I did live to have need of many of the notes, and many found their way, in one edition or another, into my plays and into my essays. But some hundreds were left behind, and I am making the most of them. And I am not deterred by the objection so often made to the correction or alteration of early works by poets in their latter days. I think that what is improved by time is the faculty of blending and harmonising.

> The cunning hand of art to fling
> With spirit o'er the accustomed string—
> To seem to wander, yet to bend
> Each motion to the harmonious ending—
> Such is the task our riper age inspires
> Which makes our day more glorious ere it closes,

says Goethe, as rendered by Lord F. Egerton. (I cannot help the word 'glorious,' as it is there, so you must not laugh at it.) In making use of my notes, a good deal of care and workmanship is needed in order to bend and blend the interpolation and the context and avoid the appearance of a patch; but this sort of work I have done all my life, and I think I can do it as well now as formerly.

And now I am getting long, and perhaps as I get older it would be as well that I should adopt the post-card form of correspondence like Gladstone. I

suppose his object is to prevent, in Persian phrase, the steed of the pen from getting loose in the plain of prolixity. And it is a very good device.

I began by saying I would let you off; but, mind, only this time—never again.

Ever yours affectionately,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Aubrey de Vere to Henry Taylor.

Curragh Chase, Adare: October 5, 1877.

All the pictures of eminent nineteenth-century men whom you have left behind in these volumes[1] are *portraits* in the highest sense. In your accounts of Dr. Whately you might have added that he was as rich in fancy as he was poor in imagination. He was a very generous man in money matters, and very forgiving to those who worried him. He was also a very sincere man, though there is one unlucky instance to the contrary published by his daughter, and often quoted—viz. that in working the Irish national system of education he thought he had to conceal from the Roman Catholics his real opinions as to the fatal effect that system was to have on their religion. Your sketch of Carlyle is admirable; but I do not think his love of truth, either in matters concrete or contemplative, bears any large proportion to his scorn of 'shams,' otherwise he would be more careful not to 'over-run' truth in his

[1] The volumes of the *Autobiography*.

hunt after her, and he would take more pains to ascertain that each subject of his declamation was not a truth before he denounced it as 'bottled moonshine.' The revolutionary people readily forgive his phrases in praise of despotic rule, just as the Whigs forgave Moore for his Irish patriotism when they found he was contented to hang his harp on the orange-trees in the conservatories at Holland Park. Carlyle's admirers feel that *his works* are at the revolutionary side. You might add great good humour to the list of Sir James Stephen's good qualities. I remember once, when he was launching forth against the High Churchmen as inconsistent, I answered that no one could escape disparagement, and that he was himself sometimes regarded as 'a transcendental Quaker with a tendency to Popery.' He took no offence.

From Sir Frederick Elliot to Henry Taylor.

7 Onslow Square, S.W.: December 20, 1877.

My dear Taylor,—I have procured and cut out for you the accompanying article from the 'Pall Mall Gazette' of Saturday, thinking that from its allusions—as well as, I hope, perhaps from its subject—it may interest you. Do tell me whether you know who was the author of that striking speech, and under what title it was published.[1]

[1] 'What has been the fruit among every people and in every age of the surrender of political power into the hands of "organisations"? We are tempted to quote some admirable observations upon this danger, which are to be found in a curious corner of literature. In a

For my part, I have long felt that the most certain of political tendencies in England is what, for want of a better name, I will call the *Yankeeising* tendency. The worship of wealth and notoriety, the growing corruption in the commercial, manufacturing, and professional classes, the adulation of the multitude, are all of them signs of the advance in this direction. And now I thoroughly agree with the writer of this article, the further attempt to destroy all independence of character and originality of thought, by the pestilent creation of *Caucuses*, is one more step in the same course.

note to *Philip van Artevelde*, Sir Henry Taylor cites a few passages from a remarkable "speech against political unions delivered in a debating society in the University of Cambridge," and published anonymously five-and-forty years ago. "I should hate to live in a country," says the writer, or speaker (we wonder if his after-reputation fulfilled the promise of his youth), "in which such institutions predominated, as predominate they must if they exist at all; as I should hate to live in a country in which all individual liberty and all individual responsibility—without which no man can be good or wise or strong or happy—should be bowed down into uniformity with the general will (if through fear, bad enough; if willingly, still worse)—should be merged and melted down and mingled up into that great mass of ordered and digested opinion in which alone consists the much-boasted strength of these much-boasted political combinations; as I should hate, in short, to live in a land where men should act in multitudes and think in multitudes and be free in multitudes." Such a nation, the speaker goes on to say, "might be full even to fatness" of glory and wealth and conquest and political independence; but not for all these things would it be fitting to make England "a nation of politicians—say, rather, of political instruments—of men, that the whole together might be powerful, consenting to be each man a slave." This vigorous pleading for individual freedom in politics—written, be it observed, before the caucus system had grown to any proportions in the United States—seems to us to convey a warning against the danger that menaces English Liberalism through the growth of organisations like the Birmingham Four Hundred.'—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

Coupled with this are the indications that here, as in America, the authority of the Legislature is declining. The foremost members no longer settle their differences in Parliament; they answer each other in newspapers or in magazines, as the case may be, and appeal not to their brother legislators but to the outside public. In this I by no means undervalue the modern magazines. On the contrary, I, for one, delight in their ability and freedom of discussion. All I say is that the resort to them of politicians for political purposes shows the gradual displacement of the political centre of gravity. If one has some public object at heart, who would think of beginning to stir it in Parliament? The days of its glory are gone.

In all this there is a certain Nemesis. The House of Commons has—probably from a fatal necessity—absorbed all the functions of the State, until it is smothered by them; and it is elsewhere that people look for active vitality. Hence the attempts to rule and over-rule us from music-halls, or by speeches to mobs upon heaths; and hence the sad example of the autumn of 1876, when men of letters deserted their proper character of self-possessed advisers, and snatched at the reins of power, just as if critics from their right place in the stalls insisted upon leaping on the stage to exhibit their own ineptitude as actors.

Yours affectionately,

T. Fred. Elliot.

From Henry Taylor to Professor G. F. Armstrong.

The Roost, Bournemouth : January 8, 1878.

Dear Mr. Armstrong,—I send you my fourth volume, containing the essays on which your brother has pronounced so eloquent a panegyric.

I was under severe pressure in the preparation of my fifth volume, till December 31, when I sent the whole of it to the printers. I have not yet had any proofs, and if it is to be published, as announced, on the first of February, I shall have a good deal to do when I do get them. But in the interval I have been able to finish the 'Life' of your brother, and read the essays on Essays, on Coleridge, on Wordsworth, on Shelley, and on Keats. As to the 'Life,' I have forgotten what I said before; but in case I have not said it already, what I wish to say now is, that your brother's was, in my estimation, a more abounding life and nature than I have met with before—intellect, imagination, emotions, affections, joys, and labours combining to make a fulness of life beyond what I have known or read of in any other human being.

Of those of the essays which I have read, I think all abound in the gifts in which his nature and mind abounded, those on Essays and Essayists, on Coleridge, on Shelley, and on Keats more signally than that on Wordsworth, which I should conjecture to have been written at an earlier age. As to faults, I hardly know on a first reading what they are or where to find them. I might say that his admirations

are sometimes excessive, and that he attributes to the poets and essayists he admires more of transcendent and exquisite power and grace in one or another of their achievements than I remember to have recognised in them; but this may simply mean that he was in the nineteenth, twentieth, or at most twenty-fourth year of his age, whereas I am in my seventy-eighth. I think, also, that his genial and generous temper, and his desire to be catholic and comprehensive in the range of his estimates, have made him in one or two places almost self-contradictory.

I may have more to say, or perhaps something to unsay, when I have read the rest of the essays and the volume of poems, but this may not be till next month, when my proof sheets are off my hands.

Believe me yours most sincerely,

HENRY TAYLOR.[1]

From Henry Taylor to the Hon. Mrs. E. Villiers.

Bournemouth: May 18, 1878.

Dearest Mrs. Edward,—Many thanks for the three old letters of mine, and for the one fresh new letter of yours. *Your* letters are more truly yourself than mine are myself. They are fluent in fact as well as in form. Mine are true in substance, and

[1] Henry Taylor's interest in the life and writings of Edmund Armstrong found expression in an article by him in the *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1878.

they *seem* to be what you say they are, natural and easy ; but most of them are written slowly and with care—some with almost as much care as I would bestow upon an ode or a sonnet. And in that, though they produce a false effect, they are true to me and my nature : mine being a slow, brooding sort of mind, habitually exercising and amusing itself in the moulding and shaping of language, and producing the effect of ease by the exercise of art. The letter from Witton of March 22, 1853, will afford an acceptable contribution to my Autobiography ; or, if not to that, to a selection from my correspondence which will probably make a second posthumous publication.

When I spoke of Lady Minto's visit being put off owing to the illness of a near relation, I did not say who he was, because she desired me not to speak of it ; but now I may say it was Lord Russell, for his critical state is announced in every day's newspaper, and I am expecting every day to hear of his death. In the last of his published works he said that it was a happiness to him to call me his friend, and, though it was only in our elderly years that our friendship began, it was a friendship which I valued much on his own account and on his wife's ; but latterly I have not desired for either of their sakes that his life should be prolonged. I knew her in her girlhood, and it was through my interest in her (for very interesting she always was, and always must be) that I reached my interest in him. I am very anxious to

know what will be the effect of his death, and whether her long anxieties will have made her more or made her less equal to meet the end. What is supposed to be a preparation for such events is often only a wearing out of the strength needed to encounter them.

Ever affectionately yours,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Henry Taylor to Lord Blachford.

The Roost, Bournemouth : June 5, 1878.

I am reading again Trevelyan's 'Life of Macaulay,' and find it, as I found it before, exceedingly interesting, more so than I can recollect to have found any other biography—much more than I found the man himself. One of the things it teaches me, indeed, is how little one knows of a man by mere personal acquaintance, and how much one may be mistaken in thinking one does know him. His looks were so wholly unattractive, so commonplace, so devoid of meaning, or animation, or grace, or shapeliness, that the best one could say of them was that there was no harm in them. He says in one of his letters that he is 'sick of pictures of his own face,' but he does not indicate that their falsification of it is what sickens him ; and yet he adds : 'They all make me a very handsome fellow. Haydon pronounces my profile a gem of art, perfectly unique, and, what is worth the praise of ten Haydons, I was told yesterday that Mrs.

Littleton, the handsomest woman in London, had paid me exactly the same compliment. She pronounced Mr. Macaulay's profile to be a study for an artist.' Now, that there are men and women of the world who could say such things it is easy to understand, but how Macaulay, who was as free from vanity as any man well could be, was enabled to listen to them with satisfaction is to me wholly unintelligible. Even when I knew nothing of his nature, or of its ardent affections, its tender emotions, its generosities and sensibilities, and recognised only his intellectual vigour and vivacity, his looks always seemed to me the most impudent contradiction of himself that Nature had ever dared to throw in a man's face. I could not conceive how he came by them ; and, although I think I was rather disposed to like him personally, I never could quite get over them. Interesting as the life is, and amusing, too, it is also saddening to me. The friends and acquaintances of my youth make their appearance one after another, and 'this transitory life' seems more transitory than ever.

From Henry Taylor to Lady Agatha Russell.

Hythe : August 18, 1878.

Dear Agatha,—Your letter was not only a pleasure but a relief to me, for it seemed so long since I had heard of your mother that I was anxious about her. I am so very glad to hear that she is better

and stronger! It is well that your mother's imperfection of sight does not exclude her from taking pleasure in the beauty of Nature. It is the most soothing of all pleasures, and I believe that it is rather enhanced than impaired by some sorts of imperfect vision. My father's sight from his earliest life was so imperfect that he had to move his one eye from one end of a line to the other when he read, but I never knew any one, except Wordsworth, who had such an ardent love of natural beauty ; and I used to think that his sort of sight produced something like the effect of moonlight on what he saw, giving it a visionary character, and obliterating everything in it that might be out of accord with the general effect. For there can hardly be any scene in Nature which is wholly free from some little blots and blurs, and on this ground I know that Wordsworth found fault with Scott's practice of going with a notebook to a scene he meant to describe, and taking an account of it. He said that the memory would present the more poetical picture, retaining what was congruous and dropping what was not. So I will try to think that in your mother's case there may be in some things the gain of a loss ; but nevertheless I wish you could tell me that her eyes are in a way to get well. My answer to her inquiry is, that I neither am, nor ever was, a Tory. On most political questions I have been all my life a man of no opinions. With the small amount of applicable knowledge I possess, I feel that opinions of mine on organic questions would be

nothing more than guesses, and very likely bad guesses. I think that of men I can form a judgment; and I sit at the feet of this man or that accordingly; just now not certainly at the feet of Lord Beaconsfield, much rather at the feet of Gladstone, though for the moment feeling even that seat a little shaky—he is so impassioned. And as to the Anglo-Turkish Convention, if I were to allow myself to make a guess I should say that the conditions of the obligation it pretends to undertake are so indefinite that it can be shuffled off at any time with the greatest ease, and may be anything or nothing as the convenience of any future Minister may dictate. As to Lord Beaconsfield, I remember calling at Pembroke Lodge when his last novel came out and finding your mother reading it, and on asking what she thought of it, she replied, 'Well, you know, I thought I should find some instruction as to how one should behave oneself in the company of Dukes and Duchesses and those sort of people, but I was surprised to find . . . ;' and she mentioned one thing or another which had disappointed her expectations. And if I read the story of Lord Beaconsfield's life with a view to be instructed how a statesman should behave himself, I meet with what is equally disappointing. The country may very possibly profit in some ways by his cleverness and sagacity, but it cannot escape a certain amount of dishonour in being represented by a man whose personal character I suppose all the world knows to be of a low type. Your mother may

think I am a Tory because I voted for a man of that party in the last election. It was the only occasion on which I ever did vote for anybody, and at the next election I mean to vote for a man of the other party, the character of the man and not the party which he belongs to being in both cases the ground of my vote.

Ever affectionately yours,
HENRY TAYLOR.

From Henry Taylor to Lord Blachford.

The Roost, Bournemouth : February 25, 1879.

My dear Blachford,—I have come to the end of the two Blue Books, 1878–79, reading all that seemed material to the questions at issue, and the impressions I have received are that Sir Bartle Frere may have been right in the conclusion that a conflict with Cetewayo was inevitable, but that he was wrong in taking it upon himself to provoke one ; that he was justified in demanding an atonement for the seizure of the two women in British territory, but that by making his other demands simultaneously he deprived himself of the right to call that demand, as he does call it, a test, and to treat the insufficient answer to it as in itself a *casus belli* ; that he was wrong in treating the silence of Cetewayo at his coronation, when Shepstone announced the principles he was expected to adopt, as a constructive obligation ; that he was right in asking for reinforcements as indispens-

able for a defensive force ; that he was wrong in using for attack the force which he had stated would be adequate only for defence ; that he was the more wrong in so using it, inasmuch as it had been sent expressly for defence and not for attack, and in the spirit of the Secretary of State's policy and not of his own.

With regard to the element of justice to which you attach so much importance in our dealings with the native tribes, I do not doubt that you are right *in a sense* ; that is, understanding the word as meaning the faithful adherence to a promised or declared non-aggressive policy. In a large sense, I find it hard to say what is justice and what is not in the relations between a civilised community and savage tribes. Natural justice would plead for the deliverance of the oppressed, and a more dire and dreadful oppression than that suffered by the Zulus, or a more horrible monster of injustice than Cetewayo, I never heard or dreamt of.

But this borders upon the theme of national philanthropy at the national charge, which would present very difficult questions if they were not bounded and governed by the primary question of what the nation may be expected to acquiesce in, and what expenditure it will authorise. The policy of the Government must necessarily rest upon this foundation and be a cool and calculating policy. The policy of Sir Bartle Frere is animated and fired by what surrounds him, and appeals to natural rather than political justice ;

and under this excitement, and with the abounding powers and activities which belong to him, I think he has lost his sense of subordination and of the duties he owes to the Government; or, if not lost it, has been impelled to put it on one side. Whether the nation and the Government will forgive him will depend upon success.

I have read his despatches with much admiration, notwithstanding the fault to be found with him. And I have been surprised to see the evidence of ability in those of Sir Henry Bulwer also. When I was cognisant of his proceedings in a small West Indian Government, I thought him a quiet, sensible sort of man, but nothing more. I suppose he had little or nothing to do which could develop more, and did not think it worth while, as some men would, to find or make something to do.

I write to you at Blachford, but I hope you find yourself equal to travelling, and that you will soon jump up in the House of Lords; and you must take care to speak to the reporters, and not too fast to be heard.

Ever yours affectionately,

Henry Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to Mrs. ——.

The Roost, Bournemouth : November, 1879.

The impression you received of Charles Greville from his Memoirs is very much the impression they have made upon many people here, those, that is, who did not know him intimately as I did. But it is not a just impression. The only justice he did himself in his Memoirs is in the way of self-blame. Much of the world he lived in he did not approve more than you approve it. And he did not like himself for continuing to live in it any more than you like him. This he expresses once and again in his Memoirs. But the temptations of the turf were too strong for him, as they have been for many men who are not weak in other ways. The life he lived with his political associates and his intimate friends was of a very different character. I enclose a letter from the one with whom he was perhaps latterly the most closely associated—Lord Granville. It is addressed to his sister, by whose hands I had sent him some sheets of my Autobiography, including what relates to Greville. You will see that he agrees with me in every point but one, and that relating only to his political aptitudes. You say you cannot realise that I was one of the world he lived in. But he lived in all sorts of worlds, I for only two or three years in any of them.

From Henry Taylor to the Hon. Mrs. E. Villiers.

Bournemouth : November 22, 1879.

I have left a very interesting letter of yours unanswered longer than is my wont, perhaps because, being so interesting, it deserved more of an answer than I have felt equal to. Not that I have had anything to complain of, unless I were to complain of having lived into my eightieth year. I forget how I came to call you Fiordeliza. Perhaps it was on some occasion when your exceeding love of flowers broke out as it used to do from time to time at Grove Mill. It could not, as you say, be from much likeness in you to the dramatic individual of that name. Your revisit in your letter to the days of your youth at Ravensworth brings to my mind the causeless sadness of my own youth, and the accounts that others have given me of theirs, and I sometimes doubt whether childhood and youth are, as they are commonly said to be, the happy season of life. It may be that what is acute and exceptional is more sure to be remembered than what is habitual, and that in looking back we lose sight of our daily and hourly cheerfulness, whilst we take note of our weekly or monthly pangs. Let us hope that it is so with most of those who see a spectre in their childhood rather than a May Queen. Have you a distinct remembrance of Guido's picture? If you have, you will see that amongst the jocund nymphs that are careering round the chariot of Aurora there is one, and only one, whose face is expressive of

sadness. I have often sought for the interpretation. Is it that we are not all, without exception, happy in the morning of life? Or is it that even in the happy days of youth there will always be something in the past that we look back to with a tender regret? The latter is the interpretation I have adopted, but the former would not be untrue to nature.

From Henry Taylor to Lord Blachford.

The Roost, Bournemouth: April 3, 1880.

My dear Blachford,—I return the Dean's letter. Thanks for letting me see it. As to Tennyson's opinions, I do not know what may or may not be his competency to form opinions on political questions. I should think he is too simple and childlike to see them on all sides. There are amongst his early poems a few stanzas giving a very beautiful utterance to one view of one political question. I forget the name of the poem, but it ends with the lines—

> And I will see before I die
> The palms and temples of the South;

and I dare say you know it, though when you were here last you professed (to Alice's infinite rage and indignation) some want of conversancy with Tennyson's works, if not ignorance and neglect of them. The poem is, however, little more than a very poetical version of a speech of James Spedding's on political 'Unions' in the Cambridge Debating Club. I do not know whether Tennyson's present revolt

from Gladstone is also derived from Spedding. From what the Dean tells you they seem to be both of one mind, and Spedding's mind, on political or any other subjects, must always carry weight. There is in it, however, a leaning to the controversial which involves, perhaps, some tincture of the spirit of contradiction. If left to himself, he will contradict himself till he works himself into just thinking and comes to a correct conclusion. But if a man like Gladstone is positive and absolute and vehement, and all on one side, the spirit will lift up its head and hiss like a serpent that is trodden upon. I suspect there is something of this in Spedding's condemnation of Disraeli's proceedings as a whole, including, of course, his Afghanistan policy and warfare. That is the one question which I, notwithstanding my habitual distrust of my capacity to form opinions upon political subjects, am able to regard as utterly and unquestionably unpardonable; whilst the nature of the offence is such that I think any Government which could be guilty of it ought to be dismissed. I am disposed to estimate very highly the personal qualities of some members of the Government—of Lord Cairns, Sir Stafford Northcote, and Mr. Cross; and I can only conceive that they thought it their duty to occupy themselves with their departmental business, and leave such questions as these to Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury. Such relinquishments may be necessary for carrying on the business of a Government, but in that case men of high character

should not consent to serve in the same Cabinet with men of low character.

As to Spedding's notion that Gladstone should have held himself aloof from parties, and occupied a position like that of the Duke of Wellington in his latter years—interposing only as moderator—I think it is founded upon a misconception of Gladstone's nature and faculties. The Duke was a cold man, with perhaps, under ordinary circumstances, a sufficient sense of his own incompetency to judge of many political questions, and a corresponding estimate of the limits of his duty, along with an honest desire to perform it when he knew what it was. Gladstone is of an ardent nature, with powers of thought wonderfully varied and extensive, and unrivalled facilities for inculcating his opinions and giving effect to them. The sphere of duty allotted to the one man is totally different from that of the other. A few days after Gladstone's resignation of office in 1874, he told me that he 'hoped to get his life into a new groove.' He did not recognise then what I think he must recognise now—the impossibility of doing so, at least in any other way than by quitting Parliament and living abroad. The Bulgarian massacre must have opened his eyes, if nothing else had. He must have become aware then that it was in his power to transmute or inflect the policy of the Government, or at all events—

> Teach them with practised step to prance,
> And high curvetting slow advance.

And the power which he possessed it was his duty to exercise, not as a moderator between two parties, but as a dictator to one or both. He could not guide the Government in the right road, but he could arrest them in the wrong one. Had his power extended to turning them out, it would have been clearly his duty then, as it is now, to do so. They are apparently about to be turned out at last, and it is probably in a large measure his ardour and vehemence which has brought about that result. So I venture to differ *toto cælo* from old Jem.

As to the language Gladstone has sometimes employed in speaking of Lord Beaconsfield—which is, I suppose, the chief ground on which he is charged with having lost his balance—I do not know that it has been at all unjust, though I think it might have been more apposite, and perhaps more effective, had it indicated less of anger and more of contempt. But perhaps he thought that a Christian, though he might be angry and sin not, might not permit himself to be contemptuous. (You remember my story of Bishop Philpotts, in reply to Lord Normanby's language of contempt—'My Lords, *I* despise no man, and *therefore* not the noble Marquis.') I believe the fact to be that contempt is converted into anger when what is contemptible is lifted by ability and circumstance into power and place.

Ever yours affectionately,

Henry Taylor.

From Henry Taylor to Miss ——.[1]

The Roost, Bournemouth: October 26, 1880.

My dear ——,—A thousand thanks to you and —— and ——. Your letter is full of love—old and new—for your old cousin and your new treasure. The photograph is excellent, and gives the expression of the face with much success. If I may venture to interpret the expression, it is that of *profound* meditation; he seems to be thinking, as Carlyle has said somewhere, that 'it is altogether a serious thing to be alive.' I trust he will find it, if serious, not the less enjoyable, when he comes to know more about it. When the time for such things arrives, his father and mother and aunt must teach him to care for poetry, and then he may take to read some verses which you will find on the other side. It is well for him that he is in Italy, for here in England 'storm and tempest is our portion to drink;' and the day after my birthday there was snow upon the lawn before my windows—the earliest beginning of winter that has been known for many years. In Ireland there are storms and tempests of another kind, and what Gloucester (in 'Richard III.') calls 'the winter of our discontent.' But we are all well, and keep never minding. With much love from all to all,

Ever yours affectionately,

Henry Taylor.

[1] In acknowledgment of a photograph of her baby nephew.

TO ASCANIO CHARLES HENRY TEALDI.

'Tis eighty years since I was born,
Thy life does but begin;
But there are realms where eve and morn
May claim to be akin,
The sunset lights, the break of day,
In one great glory lost,
Where all may give their hearts away,
Nor ever count the cost,
And we, though far apart on earth,
May blend glad greetings at thy second birth.

October, 1880.

From Henry Taylor to Miss Frances Power Cobbe.

The Roost, Bournemouth: May 9, 1881.

Dear Miss Cobbe,—If anticipated benefit to mankind from vivisection justifies the torture of an animal, would it not also justify the torture of a man? He may or may not be worth a hundred dogs; but what is he in comparison with countless generations of mankind? Would it not be 'a crime' to sacrifice the countless generations in order to spare the one man? And ought not a philanthropic surgeon to take a safe and well-contrived opportunity, if any such should be available, of operating upon his patient for the benefit of mankind? If Mr. Darwin's plea is valid with the profession, I think I should hardly like to send for a *very* scientific surgeon, who might also be *very* philanthropic.

Believe me yours sincerely,

Henry Taylor.

From Earl Grey to Henry Taylor.

Howick, Lesbury, Northumberland: November 18, 1881.

My dear Taylor,—I am much obliged to you for your letter, which I received this morning. I have not the very slightest expectancy that my pamphlet will do any good; but when one has a strong opinion on an important public question, a desire to express it somehow or other naturally arises, and, having been asked to reprint the letters which appeared in the 'Times,' I took the opportunity of adding the preface.

What you say of the indifference of the public to its own interest is very true. It is only when some special interest is threatened, and some particular class wishes to secure advantage or avert loss, that the greater part of men will make any serious effort, and I am afraid the 'educated politicians' are very little to be trusted for making any exertion to defend the general interest when no advantage to their party is likely to follow from their doing so. It is one of the most lamentable characteristics of the politics of the present day that those who take a lead in them seem now to consider so very little what is good for the country as compared to what is good for the party, and the decision of questions most deeply affecting the welfare of the nation is really transferred to the most ignorant part of the population. The change for the worse in this respect since household

suffrage and ballot were established seems to me very striking and very alarming. . . .

Yours very truly,

GREY.

From Henry Taylor to Algernon C. Swinburne.

The Roost, Bournemouth: December 5, 1881.

Dear Mr. Swinburne,—It was very kind of you to send me 'Mary Stuart.' I have read it, and I trust it will find its way to the place of pre-eminence occupied by your other poetry in what I regard as an eminently poetical generation. In the volume just published of Southey's correspondence with Miss Bowles I find him writing (I think in 1825) that poems were published and passed unnoticed in every month then, which, had they appeared thirty years before, would have made a reputation for their author. Might not the like comparison be made between the present time and that in which he so wrote? I recollect making some notes many years ago for an essay on the *poemata obscurorum virorum* of the earlier years of this century. If I were to attempt the same thing now I should find myself trampling a sort of gold-dust so thick that it would be impossible to distinguish one grain from another. And, unfortunately, the demand has not increased in proportion to the supply. The article has sadly cheapened, and a gem is parted with for a monkey which formerly would have been worth 'a wilderness of monkeys.'

In your grand description of Mary Stuart (pp. 151–52) there is one word, 'reverence,' which I think goes too far, or, rather, goes out of the way.[1] But I do not mean to criticise. I have entered the eighty-second year of my age, and that is not a time of life for critical exercitation.

Yours sincerely,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Algernon C. Swinburne to Henry Taylor.

The Pines, Putney Hill, S.W. : December 6, 1881.

Dear Sir Henry Taylor,—I must needs trouble you with a brief word of most sincere thanks for the great kindness of your letter. It is no mere formal compliment to say that there is no man in England whose commendation of my play could give me one half the pleasure that yours does, knowing and feeling as I do that no other man's opinion carries half the weight of your authority on that high and difficult form of art which you alone in our time and country have triumphantly revived.

With regard to the questionable word 'reverence,' as applied to Mary Stuart, I readily bow to your objection ; and yet I think that something might be said in vindication of the instinct which leads man not only to admire, but even—may it not be said?—

[1] [She shall be] from none
Quite without reverence and some kind of love
For that which was so royal.

to venerate the mere quality of courage, apart from any higher principle than dauntlessness, when long sustained against various forms of trial and displayed under physically defenceless conditions. But I must not be tempted by the kindness of your criticism into the presumption of undertaking an argument with you on a question of ethics, especially in relation to historic drama.

Yours gratefully,
A. C. Swinburne.

From Miss Kate Perry to Henry Taylor.

January 21, 1882.

I am reading now that delightful book, Miss Fox's memories of her friends, which no doubt you are reading also and enjoying. Why is so remarkable a woman as Caroline Fox so little known to the world at large? Her power of narrating and reproducing the wisdom which fell from the lips of the very remarkable men she associated with is very astounding, because, it appears to me, to be able to do so one must have some knowledge of the subject on which they were discoursing—philosophic, and scientific, and metaphysical—which is very extraordinary when you consider how young she was. For instance, when she gave that admirable transcript of Carlyle's lectures, with humility I remember how dear Jane and I attended them also. And what did we bring away from them? Only a few grotesque

looks and odd guttural expressions ; and I remember Jenny imitating him very funnily, when looking at his notes. After his hour was over he said, ' I find I have been talking to you all for one hour and twenty minutes, and not said *one word* of what is down on this sheet of paper, the subject-matter of our lecture to-day. I ask you your indulgence, though you have good right not to give it to me ; so good morning.'

I dare say you were present also at that lecture, and remember the amusement it caused.

From Henry Taylor to Lord Blachford.

The Roost, Bournemouth : June, 1882.

These are terrible times, as you say, and I am not surprised that you should be wishing to get away from political life as it is led at present, and from the facts it has to deal with. Sir W. Harcourt told a friend of mine last week that Gladstone is strong in health and calm and undismayed. As to his policy and his proceedings, the one thing I feel sure of is that they are conscientious, and the best he could think of for the public interest. That there are evils in abundance to follow in the future as well as evils that have been following in the past, he, I should think, must know as well as any man. What he has to consider is whether there is any other possible policy which would be followed by less of evil, and those who find most fault with him (Lord Grey, for

instance) seem almost to put the question of alternatives aside, whereas to me it seems to be the whole question. Another omission they often make is, when they knew what *they* would do, to take into account whether or not Parliament could be induced to do it. As to his dealings with Parnell, though they have not had the effect he seems to have expected from them, have they not divided and weakened the Parnellite party, even if they have not otherwise strengthened his own? To cut off the head of a party is surely something, even when the tail is left.

I never met with Colonel Chester, but I remember things that you have told me about him. As to the frog and the nightingale, I agree with the Jesuit and not with Pascal.[1]

[1] Lord Blachford had written (May 29, 1882) as follows: —'I forget whether you ever met at our house an old American friend of ours, whose death appears in the newspapers (Colonel Chester), a curiously simple-hearted genealogist, who always reminded me of the Jesuit's saying which Pascal bitterly attacks, that (with an application to the good works of man) "God had graciously given to the poor frog the same delight in his croaking as the nightingale took in her song." He (Col. C.) devoted his life to genealogy, and thought it well spent in ferreting out the minutest particulars of the minutest families, with a kind of enthusiastic devotion which enabled him to say that one thing at least he had done — one thing as no man had done it before him, or, I add, will probably do after him. But with all this, a keeper of the two great Commandments, and as pure, affectionate, and simple-hearted man as I ever knew.'

From Henry Taylor to the Hon. Mrs. E. Villiers.

The Roost: July 18, 1882.

That 'science was his forte and omniscience his foible,' was said, not by Frank Sheridan of Macaulay, but by Sydney Smith of Whewell, and it was more applicable to Whewell, whose field covered science as well as literature. Macaulay, I think, made no claim to scientific attainments. Whewell was a man of genuine abilities as well as extensive knowledge; but a rather imperious tone of mind led to the formation of a party opposed to him at Cambridge, and when he was to be Master of Trinity the party met to consider what was to be done. Peacock was at the head of it, and he opened the proceedings with a sentence which I have always thought instructive: 'He is very magnanimous, he bears no resentments, he must be fairly but temperately *resisted*.' That is what comes of being magnanimous.

I dare say you are right in thinking that the style of my 'Notes from Life' is too solemn and didactic for the modern reader; and if it is, as you say, more like that of the seventeenth than of the eighteenth century, that is what it is natural that it should be, for I greatly prefer the earlier style. In this century, and, I believe, down to this day, Addison has been adopted as a model in our schools and colleges; and, though no doubt his style is good of its kind, I think he polished away much of the strength and significance of our earlier English.

From Aubrey de Vere to Henry Taylor.

Athenæum Club : July 23, 1882.

I was made quite sad yesterday by seeing the statue of John Mill on the Embankment ; it looked so melancholy at once, and so destitute of the rest that often accompanies melancholy ! I suppose one of Carlyle will soon have a place near it, and will look as restless and as dreary. To some persons such monuments may be attractive ; to me they look like gloomy beacon-fires warning the heedless away from wreck-strewn shores. There is a very desolate truth about them : how unlike the monumental statues, so full of peace and hope, in the cathedrals of old ! I quite agreed with what you said in your last letter about Carlyle as depicted by Froude, and the ' stretching forth of arms to embrace ghosts.'

I have been reading Lord Grey's essay on Ireland in the ' Nineteenth Century,' and think it *admirable* ; for in these days, when every one is forsaking old and known truths, without being able to assign the shadow of any other reason for doing so, except that they are tired of hearing Aristides named ' the just,' it has become, alas ! *admirable* that a statesman should stand by the faith in politics, and set his face like a flint against the popular factions. Liberty was once a grave goddess, but now ' holy priests do bless her when she is riggish.'

From Henry Taylor to Lord Blachford.

The Roost, Bournemouth : August 21, 1882.

My dear Blachford,—At last I have come to the end of Mozley's 'Reminiscences.' I can see in the book all that you say. For a book written by such a clever man on such interesting themes, it is sometimes strangely dull ; but perhaps that adds to the effect of what is at other times so pleasant and bright. Gladstone was induced, by way of getting a little rest, to go on a visit of a day or two to a nephew of his who is an under-master at Eton. The nephew was enjoined to get him to bed at ten o'clock ; but unfortunately Mozley's 'Reminiscences' came up after dinner, and he talked of it until three o'clock in the morning, having by that time so little exhausted the subject that he said he could talk of it for three weeks longer. What would exhaust Gladstone no man knows. Aubrey de Vere, who came here two days ago, had met him at dinner a few days before, and found him in good health and spirits, sanguine about Ireland, sanguine about Egypt, cheerful about everything. I am not much in the way of hearing what is said of him, but from what I *do* hear I should imagine that he is more hated and more admired than any statesman of this century. I rather think that no men are found so provoking as conscientious men.

A newspaper was sent to me a few days ago with a paragraph in which I was said to have read no

poetry of the poets belonging to a later generation than my own, and absolutely to ignore them. I had to tell the friend who sent it me that I had read and appreciated two volumes of Swinburne's, one of Mrs. Pfeiffer's, one of G. F. Armstrong's (in part), one of Mr. Palgrave's, and one of Aubrey de Vere's, all published within the last twelve months.

It is generally supposed that in times of political excitement it is of no use to publish books, inasmuch as nothing is read but the newspapers. I suppose, however, poets like their works to be published whether they are read or not, and are accustomed to pay the costs. Aubrey de Vere's poems, 'The Foray of Queen Meave' and two other legends of Ireland before its conversion to Christianity, are admirably executed; but I am afraid the subjects are beyond the range of English interest, and, as to Irishmen, I believe they don't read books. This is a book that deserves to be read.

Ever yours affectionately,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Henry Taylor to Algernon C. Swinburne.

The Roost, Bournemouth: September 28, 1882.

Dear Mr. Swinburne,—When I thanked you for sending me 'Tristram' I said that when I should have read it I would write again. I have read it now, and I have read none of your poems with more pleasure or with more sense of a poetic power. My

want in reading poetry is a want of quickness of apprehension, not the less now when I am about to enter the eighty-third year of my life, and your kind of power in poetry is one which often sweeps me along through one or more pages with a consciousness that I am only half understanding what I read; feeling the impulse in all its fulness and the poetic beauty in all its richness with only an imperfect conception of the purport. A more periodic structure would be more suitable to me, or, if sentences are to be very long, a structure which should keep the mind suspended rather than hurry it over the ground. I mention this in case you should care to suit yourself to the slow minds as well as to the swift. But perhaps poetry, which may expect to be read repeatedly, can afford, even in the case of slow readers, to dispense with some kinds of clearness.

You may well consider me as not entitled to find faults, but I wish you could be induced to confine yourself entirely, as you do now *almost* entirely, to what must be a charm to all readers and can give a shock to none.

Believe me yours sincerely,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Algernon C. Swinburne to Henry Taylor.

The Pines, Putney Hill, S.W.: October 1, 1882.

Dear Sir Henry Taylor,—I am very sincerely gratified by the kindness of the letter which I have

just received from you. There is hardly any man living on whose praise or good opinion of my work I set so much store as I do on yours; and I trust you will not think it impertinent or obtrusive on my part to say so for once to yourself.

It is very difficult, I think, for a man to realise when he has failed, and how he has failed, to make himself clear and his meaning easy to follow at a first reading. I have observed this difficulty in others, when I have told them that I could not make out the drift of something they had written at once; and I dare say Lycophron himself thought his 'Cassandra' as lucid as an idyl of Theocritus. I hold obscurity to be so great a fault that I should think no pains too great to take in the endeavour to avoid it; but one must see a fault before it can be avoided, and this one is so difficult to see that I should not wonder if the author of the most unintelligible poem ever written in any language (which I take to be, beyond all possibility of comparison, the political and religious satire of a great tragic poet whose name was first introduced to me by a quotation in the notes to 'Edwin the Fair'—Cyril Tourneur's 'Transformed Metamorphosis') thought his allegory as translucent as we find the 'Pilgrim's Progress.'

I am sure you will believe me to be speaking the simple truth when I assure you of my gratitude for the few and kind words which close your letter with the expression of a wish that I would never

write anything which could give a shock to any reader, however rarely. But is this possible ? Nothing could be kinder or more gratifying to me than the terms in which your admonition—if I may so call it—is suggested or conveyed ; and no one could be more sorry than I should be to offend any one deserving of consideration or respect. But, if I may say so without egotism, I have always taken to heart, since first I learnt it as a child, that immortal fable of La Fontaine which records the sorrows of the miller and his son, who tried to please all critics and profit by all objections in turn, till they found that they never would get their ass to market at all unless by taking their own way as seemed best to their own poor judgment or instinct as ass-drivers. So I find that, in guiding my poor steed, or possibly donkey, I must ultimately and on the whole be guided rather by my own impulse or sense of what is right, however imperfect and fallible it may be, than by consideration or anticipation—which would probably be more fallible still—of how the result may affect some readers. But I should be honestly and sincerely sorry to give any offence or shock to the taste or the opinion of a judge like yourself.

Believe me gratefully yours,

A. C. Swinburne.

From Henry Taylor to Miss Kate Perry.

The Roost, Bournemouth : March 21, 1883.

For the last two months my time has been much taken up in correcting 'Van Artevelde.' A great admirer of it has found 147 faults in the last edition, that of 1880, consisting almost all of alterations from earlier editions. He wrote to me to remonstrate, from Tramore, Waterford, signing himself 'T. N. Harvey,' and incidentally, in reference to the use of 'thou' and 'thee' in some passages, and 'you' in others, he mentioned that he was a Quaker, but that the Quakers had left off the use of those forms. In answer to his remonstrance I asked him to point out the passages in which he considered the alterations to be for the worse, and, as I have said, he sent me his criticisms upon 147. I went to work upon them, and found they were by no means to be disregarded, and I have deferred to them in 103 of the cases and restored the original readings. I had been led into most of the alterations by an unfounded (I may say a *con*founded) dislike which had seized me for all dropping syllables at the end of blank-verse lines.

Nothing that Aubrey de Vere could say could evict me of this passing prejudice, and it has cost me a great deal of very tiresome work in the last two months to go through all Mr. Harvey's criticisms and see what was to be done.

From Henry Taylor to Mrs. Gladstone.

The Roost, Bournemouth: May, 1883.

Dear Mrs. Gladstone,—It is such a long time since I have seen anything of you or your husband that a letter from me will come to you like a stranger's; but I write to you rather than to him, because I think you can do what I want, and I cannot endure to add an atom to the burthen he is bearing. What I want is that you will send me back the copy of my Autobiography which I gave him. —— and —— have been revising it for me, and they find serious faults in it, I believe justly, and we are anxious that no copies should remain extant with the faults uncorrected.

Your husband and I have been long separated, but I less from him than he from me; for, like the rest of mankind, I am able to see him in every hour of his career, and down to the glory of these evening lights.

There seems nothing more to be wished for him except peace and repose, and that is what I wish for him with all my heart.

Believe me yours sincerely,

HENRY TAYLOR.

I am in my eighty-third year, and what is not incorrigible of my doings in this world must be corrected soon.

From the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone to Henry Taylor.

Hawarden Castle, Chester: May 15, 1883.

My dear Taylor,—A letter, as such, after a surfeit of so many years, is to me an object of horror; but a letter from you, after a stint of so many years, brings interest and delight. What you say of your separation from me is indeed too true. I hear of you but now and then, yet always in a way to make me wish to hear so much more.

The sight of your handwriting pleases me extraordinarily; it speaks volumes of your health, your vigour, your youth.

I return the books herewith. It is a great and meritorious act of obedience. The first one especially is part of my flesh and blood, as may be seen from marks and references. Moreover, I am perplexed with fear of change, lest, under the name and notion of faults, the best parts should be cut out. However, here they go.

I do hope that if there is a chance of seeing you in London you will let me know, and it will go hard with me if I do not profit by it. It is idle, I am afraid, to talk or dream of asking you here. *What* a half-century has passed since first I knew you—how towering amidst its fellows!

Most sincerely yours,

W. E. Gladstone.

You will think it, I hope, a venial theft that I have appropriated your letter to my wife.

From Henry Taylor to the Bishop of Winchester.

The Roost, Bournemouth: November 27, 1883.

My dear Lord Bishop,—My name has been put down in the list of those who are to attend the anti-vivisection meeting over which your Lordship is to preside to-morrow. I am sorry to say that it has been put down in error, for I am strictly confined to the house in winter. But I am entirely in accord with the object of the meeting, and there are one or two pleas for vivisection, often, I think, allowed to escape refutation, on which I should have wished to address the meeting had it been in my power to attend.

It is assumed by the advocates of vivisection that human pain is far more worthy of consideration than any that can be suffered by animals. This may be a natural conclusion for human beings to come to; but I have endeavoured more than once, when writing on the subject, to suggest that human beings, even if thinking of themselves only, would do well to advert to some elements of the question which they appear to overlook.

> Pain in man
> Bears the high mission of the flail and fan,
> In brutes 'tis purely piteous.

And not only is the discipline of pain often salutary to the sufferers; it is still oftener the correlative of moral and spiritual qualities in others—pity, charity, self-sacrifice, devout dependence, and pru-

dential forethought, virtues which would be wanting in the groundwork without it. As to the moral question, it is assumed by our opponents that the guilt or innocence of man's acts is to be judged not by their direct and manifest character and quality, but by their hypothetical results to mankind in the long run of time.

As to whether any good is to be expected for mankind from vivisection, there are equally high authorities on the one side and on the other; but there is an authority higher than either which says that evil is not to be done that good may come of it. It may be that, on a balance of results, there has been a saving of pain to mankind from the murders committed in Edinburgh some sixty years ago in order to supply bodies not otherwise to be obtained for dissection by medical students. It may be that the massacre of savage tribes by civilised monsters makes way ultimately for the peopling of the world by races of a higher order of moral and intellectual attributes.

But murders and massacres have a character of their own independently of ultimate results, and so has the infliction of torture on animals. I know very well that what I am writing may be unavailable, but I know also that you will be ready to excuse my troubling you to no purpose.

Believe me, my dear Lord Bishop,

With great respect, yours faithfully,

HENRY TAYLOR.

From Miss Kate Perry to Henry Taylor.

L'Ermitage, Hyères: December 11, 1883.

. . . I laid me down on a soft sofa and read Mary Lamb's 'Life' in the 'Eminent Women' series. If you have not already done so, I *beseech* you to do so. For many a long day I have not read so engrossing a history of two lives, hers and her brother's, and I never weary of his wit and humour; this little volume sparkles with them, mixed with his never-failing kindness and tenderness of heart. My furthest back recollection is of his playing blind man's buff with me and my sisters, in the long room of the Hermitage, where he entered privately, telling us 'not to mention it to the old people on the other side of the house,' with whom he played a solemn game of whist afterwards. This occurred when he lived with his poor sister during one of *her attacks*, at a little cottage of Mr. Bentley's. And now that I am reading George Sand's 'Life' in the same series, I remember that once, at Como, with my dear Jane and Frederick, we were alone in a small hotel, with the exception of a very remarkable Frenchwoman with whom we made a great intimacy; and one day at dinner either Jane or I (I forget which) wrote 'George Sand' on a slip of paper, passing it under the table to Frederick, who wrote back, 'I had just come to the same conclusion.' A day or two after, we made bold to ask her if she were that distinguished being; she looked very

sly, said 'I am her *greatest friend on earth*,' which we thought (but could not be certain) was an equivocal confession. She had with her a *secrétaire intime*, and spent part of every day shut up with him writing, she said, 'for the press.' After she left us she went to Vienna, and, having asked us for our direction in London, wrote to tell us she had been presented to one of the Emperor's brothers (I think the Archduke Charles), and, hearing that he had called her '*cette femme*' (it was when she was a red-hot Republican), wrote some very clever verses, which she sent him, saying he could not have glorified her more than calling her a *femme*, which ought to embody everything that was high and noble. She sent us a copy of these lines, and we—lost them! Now I read the description of her manner, her person, style of dress, and soft voice, I see we were right in our supposition, and I can join her in the many distinguished people (*cat-like*) I have looked at in my life.

From Henry Taylor to Algernon C. Swinburne.

The Roost, Bournemouth : May 9, 1884.

Dear Mr. Swinburne,—In reading your very interesting article in the 'Nineteenth Century' of this month on Wordsworth and Byron I find you say that 'the Wordsworthians, from Sir Henry Taylor to Mr. Matthew Arnold, might not unreasonably be counselled, if it were not now too late, to break themselves of a habit in which they have hither-

to been prone to indulge, the habit of girding and gibing at Shelley as a morbid and delirious visionary, notable mainly for fantastic feebleness of moral idea and uncertain hold on moral facts, a nervous, unmanly, unnatural, unreal, unwholesome sort of poet.' Are you not mistaken in imputing to me a 'habit' of girding at Shelley? I have looked through my published writings and I cannot find more than one mention of him, which is in the preface to 'Van Artevelde,' written more than fifty years ago. I speak there of his poetry as having 'much beauty, exceeding splendour of diction and imagery, as well as exquisite charms of versification;' but it is true that I designate him as 'purely and pre-eminently a visionary,' and I dwell too much, I am afraid, and in too depreciating a spirit, upon what I conceived to be a want of relevancy in his poetry to the truths of life and nature. I am sorry for this, which, on your authority, I will readily assume to be an undue depreciation; but I should have been far, far more sorry if I had ever spoken of Shelley in a gibing and girding spirit, or in any spirit but one of great admiration for the gifts he possessed, whatever I might have conceived, erroneously or not, to be those in which he was wanting.

I hope you have not suffered, as so many have done, from this worst of spring weather that we have had for more than a month. I have not had much to complain of, as I never leave the house between October and June, but I have been sorry for some of

my friends who cannot dispense with air and exercise. At eighty-four years of age one has no need of it.

Believe me yours sincerely,
HENRY TAYLOR.

From Algernon C. Swinburne to Henry Taylor.

The Pines, Putney Hill, S.W. : May 14, 1884.

Dear Sir Henry Taylor,—Your very kind letter has but this moment reached my hands, having been addressed to Mr. C. A. (instead of A. C.) Swinburne, of Upper Hamilton Terrace, St. John's Wood (instead of the address at the head of this note-paper). It seems that I am afflicted, like the late Mr. Carlyle, with an unknown namesake : I must endeavour not to let the affliction affect me in point of temper as it seems to have affected that amiable man of genius.

I must have expressed myself very awkwardly, I fear, if I have conveyed an impression that I meant to impute to you personally a habit which I simply referred to as common to the admirers (in an exclusive sense) of Wordsworth in general. I did mean to intimate that it was rather a custom—what Cardinal Newman would call a ' note '—of the Wordsworthian school to decry the genius and depreciate the work of Shelley (no less than it is now the fashion of a sect in letters to depreciate and decry the genius and the work of Wordsworth, and, while glorifying Shelley at his expense, to ignore in the

most unaccountable and indefensible manner the quite incalculable obligations of the younger poet to the elder). Of this habit the earliest, and beyond all question the most important, example known to me is afforded by the passage which you quote from your preface to 'Philip van Artevelde.' The author of that poem 'speaks with authority, not as a scribe;' and to ignore that authority while challenging the conclusions of the Wordsworthian school or church in general on the subject of Shelley's character as a poet, would have appeared to all readers acquainted with this well-known expression of your opinion an act on my part either of cowardice in avoiding, or of impertinence in passing over, the name of Shelley's most formidable—or rather of his only formidable—assailant. However, I cannot regret a misconstruction, due only to an equivocal form of expression on my own part, which has procured me the pleasure and the honour of a letter from you, and the gratification of hearing that this very unseasonable season—of which Shakespeare would seem to have prophesied in the third speech of his Titania—has not had the bad effect on you which it must have had on so many. No sort of weather affects me unpleasantly except heavy and relaxing heat; but neither that nor anything else appears to affect your junior by two years only, M. Victor Hugo, of whom I lately received a most satisfactory account from the lady whose translation of Shelley's 'Cenci' I venture to send you, on the remote chance that there

may be anything in my preface to interest you, in case you should care to glance at it.[1] Nevertheless, I was not sorry to hear that he had given up a project of accompanying his grandchildren last autumn on an Alpine excursion ; though I hope I may be allowed to wish that both he and yourself may see as many more birthdays as did my grandfather, who lived to his ninety-ninth year in perfect health and enjoyment of life and books and friends till within quite a few days of his leaving them.

If you do not forbid me, I should like, when I republish my essay, to quote the words in which you disclaim the apparent misinterpretation of your meaning or misrepresentation of your opinion implied in the expressions to which you refer. I may not improbably bring out a new volume of Essays and Studies in the course of the year, when I should naturally wish to correct any misstatement or misapprehension into which I might have been betrayed ; and in such an instance as this I should of course be more than usually desirous and indeed anxious to do so.[2]

Believe me yours sincerely,

A. C. Swinburne.

[1] *Les Cenci : drame de Shelley.* Traduction de Tola Dorian, avec Préface de Algernon Charles Swinburne. Paris : 1883.

[2] The permission requested by Mr. Swinburne was given. See Mr. Swinburne's *Miscellanies*, pp. 371, 372.

From Henry Taylor to Lord Blachford.

The Roost, Bournemouth: January 22, 1885.

I had read your letter in the 'Pall Mall,' and agreed with it throughout. I have long thought that communities such as the Canadian and Australian, with independent representative legislatures and Governments, are not and cannot be Colonies more than in name, and what would be more for their advantage and ours would be that they should be regarded as friendly allies, predisposed by a common origin and some connected interests to be helpful to each other when they can without injury to either, but at liberty each to judge for itself whether the case is one in which there is or is not any such injury or probability of injury as should exempt them from giving the help wanted. I think the recognition of this relation must come in no long time, and that our policy should be adapted to it.

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